

Pope's Portraiture:

A critical examination of portraiture in
the poetry of Alexander Pope

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Abstract

This work examines and critically evaluates what the author considers to be the chief concerns of Pope's verse portraits, and particularly attempts to trace the manifestations of these concerns in the formal, rather than argumentative or polemic, qualities of Pope's writing. The works selected have accordingly been primarily those in which the density of poetic description of character was sufficient to indicate implicit qualities of psychological interest; sometimes at remarkable variance with more express argument of contemporary theories. Starting from an initial agreement with Dr Johnson concerning Pope's shortcomings as a philosopher, the author chooses works for detailed study on the basis of the various ways they present human types and characters: through a semi-dramatic narrative presentation, through brief life-histories, through descriptive character-sketches, or through implication of character by environment.

The author bases much of his work on the idea of a dual interest in Pope's verse, which is partly satiric and aimed at moral or social correction, partly humorous and aimed at examination or elucidation of human nature. The Dunciad and An Essay on Man are examples of the two interests as opposite extremes;

but in most of Pope's work, the author maintains, the functions are complementary.

The first chapter, chiefly concerned with the Epistle to Cobham, briefly expounds the problems which Pope suggests may be encountered in the study of the psyche, and his use of the Augustan theory of the Ruling Passion as a solution to these problems. The author argues that this solution not only has rational shortcomings, but undervalues the level of psycho-poetic achievement of the verse portraits which end the epistle. These are accordingly examined using a technique following the close reading method pioneered in Pope studies by Geoffrey Tillotson, Pat Rogers and Maynard Mack. Over the course of the following two chapters, the author attempts to identify the psychological centre of character Pope argues for with the principle of individual identity, which the criticism locates both in minor actions and social dynamics (examined in The Rape of the Lock) and in major actions and the role played by individuals in society at large (examined in the portraits of rich men in the two epistles on wealth). Having looked at both of these types, in Chapter Four the author considers their implications as satire, as psychology, and as each in relation to and arising from the other. Taking the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot and The Dunciad as its texts,

this chapter argues that the corrective functions of satire are possible only if the Ruling Passion is not the immutable and supreme authority it is defined as; hence it concludes that the power of humour or psychology to reveal the essentially self-defeating nature of a self-centred hedonism is closely related to the power of satire to reform this quality. For such successful satire, however, a type of respect for the subject is also necessary, so as to preserve both credibility and to leave open room for improvement. These the final chapter attempts to locate in the Epistle to a Lady, in which the interests of satire and humour are far enough linked to produce some of Pope's most impressive portraiture, and to allow the benign manifestations of the previously destructive principles of selfhood in the portrait of Martha Blount.

The study was written at the University of Cape Town, English Department, through which the author may be contacted.

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Introduction

Pope springs eternal in the human breast,
 What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd.¹

Arthur Tillotson's witty parody at once suggests and indirectly qualifies a standard approach brought to Pope criticism. Pope can be viewed both as a poet of ideas, and as a poet least at his ease with ideas; both as a writer addressing himself to issues concerning all humanity, and as a spokesman for his age and country. One school of criticism concerns itself with the ideas of literature, man and society which Pope expresses, favouring the "eternal" aspect of his work; another concentrates on the specifically eighteenth century aspects which the second line of the couplet implies: Pope either "springs eternal" from universal causes, or he gives a peculiarly Augustan expression to peculiarly Augustan ideas. The two approaches need not oppose each other's interests; a critic such as Maynard Mack supplies a good example of a man capable of using both; but it is also true that exclusive emphasis on context or idea can hinder both understanding of the elements of Pope's milieu which he selected for inclusion in his work, and appreciation of the aesthetic

dividends he draws from them.

It is desirable in setting up a critical approach to an author's work to establish in what range of concepts and ideas he will be most fairly represented; a critical study is hardly possible without this. With a poet such as Pope, who has been the subject of such vigorous disagreement for most of his literary existence, it is particularly necessary to find a means of following his precept, to "read each Work of Wit / With the same Spirit that its Author writ".² It is no longer possible to dismiss Pope as a dangerous berserk, as Dennis did,³ if only because such indignation and the apprehension associated with it have been reduced by time to the view implied by Strachey's "fiendish monkey".⁴ The satiric hostility of a writer towards his contemporaries is unlikely to be shared or resented by those later readers who lack the emotional interest required for such hostility. It is easier to read Pope for his ideas or as a means to a better literary-historical understanding of his time; but as I have implied neither of these approaches is truly critical in its approach. Although Pope's philosophical intentions were serious, their results were usually flawed as logical argument, and his expressed ideas were so heavily derived from the theories of his contemporaries that they are chiefly of value to a

critical study of Pope's work as comparative material. Winters' comment on the strange combination of "his inability to think and his ability to write as if he thought perfectly",⁵ though harsh, indicates how inadequate a study of Pope's ideas will be as a critical approach. The work of such scholars as Lovejoy⁶ helpfully supplied this kind of study; but it is worth noting that critics such as Mack and Erskine-Hill have been led from writing on the eighteenth century context to evaluative critical judgment substantially different in tone.⁷

However valuable a knowledge of contemporary history and literature can be to the critic, the most important authority continues to be the text under consideration; and of secondary importance the works of writers and critics who have commented on those facets of the work which are under examination. My concern in this study is a criticism of poetic portraits in Pope's verse; this implies neither that I am concerned with every aspect of each work which could be regarded as containing a verse portrait, nor that elements indirectly related to thematic issues or relevant formal devices will necessarily be excluded for not occurring in actual portraits. Pope's art is an eclectic one, referring with similar ease to Grub Street and to Homer for material; to respond to such an art criticism must

be prepared to adopt a similar flexibility, such as that of a commentary following the development of the text but digressing where necessary to parallel developments. Such a technique of combined close reading and commentary has been developed in twentieth century idiom by such critics as Tillotson, Brooks and Rogers, all of whom I shall be drawing on to some extent in this study.

It remains, before sketching out the type of thematic direction I shall give to this critical reading, for me to indicate which of Pope's concerns I shall examine and why I have chosen to consider them rather through his portraiture than through any other aspect of his work. Satire, for instance, is a clear concern of Pope's; but his interest in human nature can be too easily forgotten by a reader overwhelmed by the more active side of his satire. Much of Pope's verse was engaged in a continual war with contemporary enemies; much must still be read as a denunciation of human failings. This is the active side, which is generally regarded as pure satire. That such literature can have contemplative aspects as well will be one of my assumptions in the course of this work; if this appears to disregard the active side, I cannot do better than to modify Byron: because Pope's satire's chastising power is perfect, it is assumed that it is its only perfection.⁸ According to this contention,

that satire may have a passive as well as an active side, some aspects of Pope's verse may in fact be regarded as being as much humorous as satirical. H.W. Fowler, perhaps one of the most Augustan minds of this century, distinguishes the two in tabular form:

	Motive or Aim	Province
Humour	Discovery	Human Nature
Satire	Amendment	Morals and Manners
	Method or Means	Audience
Humour	Observation	The sympathetic
Satire	Accentuation	The self-satisfied

Fowler includes a number of other related terms in the table (wit and irony for example), but their sense is unlikely to be open to dispute.⁹

In the twentieth century, while the historical and expository approaches to Pope continue to flourish, there has at the same time come a return of respect for Pope as a poet worth reading for reasons which have become associated chiefly with poets of other ages: the Augustans invoked the classical ideal of the vates with frequency, but it has only comparatively recently been recognized that this self-image meant as much to Augustan poets as to the Romantics. Roston cites "the growing tendency to argue for a more truly poetic power

in Pope's verse than the mere technical skill and wit traditionally acknowledged",¹⁰ while on the other hand Empson goes so far as to disparage what he calls "fussy local satire" while continuing to appreciate a poetic value in other verse of Pope's;¹¹ less harshly, Frye remarks that what is too often dismissed as light satire can, while remaining just that, still rise to a "terrifying climax of moral intensity";¹² and he is referring not to the apocalyptic Dunciad, but the Augustan epistle to Martha Blount. These critics obliquely imply a type of interest in Pope's verse which arises neither from a vindictive spleen nor from the mere expression of contemporary ideas and ideals; the interest which indeed Warton considered likely to outlive Pope's other achievements: "For wit and satire are transitory and perishable, but nature and passion are eternal".¹³ In other words, Pope is at once a critic of society and a nature poet; the "nature" he is interested in is human nature at large, which informs the imagery of his own age and its classical model which he works through. Tillotson lists important recurrent terms in Pope's conceptual vocabulary thus:

"Truth" is one of several terms that recur when Pope speaks of Nature. "What oft was thought", "sense", "common sense", "good sense", what is "just", "truth" - all these terms, which are either synonyms of Nature or closely related to it, recur when Nature is the theme or provides the standard.¹⁴

I do not deny that the Pope of the Moral Essays was a better poet than the Pope of An Essay on Man; but it would be erroneous to conclude that Pope abandoned larger interests for "fussy local satire" in his later work. It is rather true that the abstract interests of the earlier poet found concrete form in his later work; that what he found difficult to argue, he could successfully dramatize.

"Dramatize", however, is not quite the correct word. Drama is by its nature a sequential enactment, effectively being in the concrete what argument is in the abstract. Pope's greatest strength lay less in this region of temporal and developmental succession than in the accumulative effect of a verse which, perhaps more than any other in English, moves towards an a-temporal state. Johnson's comment on a weakness in An Essay on Criticism points out one of Pope's strengths:

... many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience; for of two or more positions, depending upon some remote and general principle, there is seldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other.¹⁵

These "positions", based on the "remote and general principle" which Tillotson detects in Pope's "Nature", are seldom in strikingly sequential order, and were often transferred from fragment to poem by Pope himself, and from one place in a poem to another by Warburton, without

the alteration of more than general context. A few examples are the images of "Byass", the "Great Turk", the hogs and lead.¹⁶ Pope's mind was of that order in which striking images will make a deep impression¹⁷ but need not necessarily become an integral part of a larger structure, remaining isolated or fragmentary in relation to specific works. At times, however, more than a fragment was the result: the characters of Chloe and Calypso in the epistle to Martha Blount were in the first case probably, in the second certainly, already near-complete pieces which Pope inserted into the whole;¹⁸ while the character of Atticus in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot is the last version of a long line of revisions. In or out of context, these are more than fragments.

This fragmentary tendency, as I said, is a strength as well as a weakness. Since Pope was so little at home in logical and sequential argument, the extent to which his verse moved away from the components of such argument, such as continuous development and significant position in a whole, assisted the emergence of another form of art: a plastic and concrete rather than temporal and abstract verse, concerned with people rather than with principles. Pope displays a strong tendency in this direction in a letter to Arbuthnot, written in 1734:

To attack Vices in the abstract, without

touching Persons, may be safe fighting
indeed, but it is fighting with Shadows.
General propositions are obscure, misty,
and uncertain, compar'd with plain, full
and home examples: Precepts only apply
to our Reason, which in most men is but
weak: Examples are pictures and strike
the Senses, nay raise the Passions¹⁹

If one edits out the imagery of combat, one has a poetic credo as applicable to the humorous, contemplative side of Pope's verse; the possible confusion of the abstract, and its solution by "Examples" as "pictures" are akin to the themes, problems, and solutions of the Epistle to Cobham published the same year; the implied use of raising the passions in support of reason is noteworthy in this context.

The Augustan ideal of art as a force capable of resisting time has secondary implications less obvious than those most commonly noted. The arts can almost "[fix] those Thoughts which arise and disappear in the Mind of Man and [transmit] them to the last Periods of Time",²⁰ the idea of which was of such importance as virtually to become an unquestioned datum of Augustan thought.²¹ Less common in Augustan verse than the ideal of a monvmentvm aere perennivs was the observation that the momentary arrest of time could itself be a valuable aid to understanding, and that within this

diminished range the various arts differed from each other in significant ways. Where a verbal argument must be apprehended over a space of time, outside of which it can no more exist than a piece of music, a painting is a complete and concrete whole confronting one in its entirety at a single moment. The division between the two types of art arises essentially from their basic nature, yet each has often attempted to gain some of the qualities of the other. Hogarth's narrative paintings cover a period of time, both by representing successive instants and by presenting within those instants the symptoms and the causes of the immediate past and future.²² Pope's verse, on the other hand, excels in a semi-pictorial representation of a scene or character in passages which, often not even integral parts of the poem they occur in, effectively take on in varying degrees the qualities of a static, a-temporal art. Even the closed couplet itself is, as its name implies, a unit sealed off from its surroundings. To some extent, this also insulates it from time. Pope's narratives often skip, in the transition from one couplet or brief passage to the next, from scene to scene, often with considerable intervals of space and time interposed; the fact that there is no hiatus felt by the reader derives chiefly from the way each scene is presented with a pictorial completeness in which significant details are brought out to supply the connections.

This a-temporal feature of Pope's verse should not, of course, be taken as an indication that he had no temporal abilities. His narrative verse is highly successful, and his portraits often take the form of miniature histories. These narratives, however, unfold more than they develop; histories are shown in Hogarthian fashion by a series of moments, from which the intervening time has to be inferred. By way of illustration: Tom comes into money in the first picture of The Rake's Progress; in the second we see, not Tom buying and hiring his possessions and entertainers, but Tom in the midst of them. Compare Sir Balaam:

... two rich ship-wrecks bless the lucky shore.

Sir Balaam now, he lives like other folks,
He takes his chirping pint, and cracks his jokes:
'Live like yourself,' was soon my Lady's word;
And lo! two puddings smoak'd upon the board.

(Epistle to Bathurst, 356-360)

After the shipwrecks, we are taken directly to the next important state, Balaam transformed, by the ingeniously understated "now"; likewise no interval of artistic enactment divides "my Lady's" advice and its effect: the "lo!" at once presents the consequence, as if by drawing aside a curtain.

The concept of the "sister arts" was clearly attractive to Pope. His studies with Jervas were apparently

not enough to make a painter of him,²³ but he certainly acquired an extraordinarily pictorial imagination for a poet. "Pope sees landscape often.... as a painter", says Tillotson;²⁴ Ault draws up a table of "colour-words" from Shakespeare to Pope in which Pope averages one colour-word in seven lines in Windsor Forest (the second highest concentration is that of Milton's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso, with one colour-word in twenty-one lines);²⁵ and Pope of course acquired a painter's vocabulary and a stock of images directly drawn from the art, which he was to use extensively in describing his means of artistic perception.

Beyond the transposition of pictorial terms, outlook, and subject from painting to verse, Pope was also helped away from the art of polemic and towards the art of exploratory creation both by his knowledge of arts, especially painting, which did not encourage an argumentative form, and by the qualities of verse which he studied and mastered. From Walsh's initial direction to careful attention to the poetic materials worked with, Pope developed a correlation of sound and sense, and ultimately an equivalence of form and sense, which allowed not only the striking mimetic quality which Pope himself advises, but even a type of self-critical verse whose form would supply an implicit commentary. Pope "took up the great rule of the sound's being a comment on the sense".²⁶

His true genius lay in this direction; when con-

fronted with the whole of a subject, a momentary totality such as a sitter for a portrait might present, he could bring considerable artistic means into play. His revisions were minute and sensitive,²⁷ and what he may have lost through his lack of a philosopher's consequential outlook he compensated for with the eclectic associative mind he could apply to the appropriate subject, and in the eclectic art this gave rise to. Pope's verse at its best is not quite literary sequence and argument.²⁸ In its eclectic complexity, as much as in the difference between ink and paint, consist the distinguishing features of Pope's verbal portraits.

The approach I shall be adopting to my subject will be largely an attempt to imitate Pope's own; a basic statement of what appear to be Pope's relevant concerns will be followed with a criticism of the verse in which he embodies them. I shall use the techniques of close reading developed by Tillotson and those who have followed him, attempting to identify and evaluate the typical features of Pope's picto-poetic thought, and ultimately to assess the conclusions and solutions which he advances to the problems his subject suggests.

Notes

¹ A. Tillotson, as quoted in G. Tillotson, On the Poetry of Pope (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 17.

² A. Pope, An Essay on Criticism, 233-234. All quotations from Pope's verse are taken from the Twickenham Edition (see Bibliography for full details). Further verse quotations from Pope will be identified in the text.

³ See J. Dennis, "Remarks on Mr Pope's 'Rape of the Lock'" in Several Letters to a Friend in Critics on Pope, ed. J. O'Neill (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), 12.

⁴ L. Strachey, Pope: The Leslie Stephen Lecture for 1925 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1925), 2.

⁵ I. Winters, In Defense of Reason (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1947), 488.

⁶ A. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933).

⁷ Compare M. Mack's The Garden and the City (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1969) with his essay "Alexander Pope" in Collected in Himself (Newark: University of Delaware Press, Associated University Press, 1982); or H. Erskine-Hill's The Social Milieu of Alexander Pope (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975) with his Pope: The Dunciad (London: Edward Arnold, 1972). The emphasis in each case on the historical in one book

and the critical in another seems to indicate that at least one eminent Pope scholar on each side of the Atlantic recognizes a difference between the two types of study.

⁸ G. Byron, "Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwoods Magazine" in O'Neill, op. cit., 18.

⁹ H.W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 241.

¹⁰ M. Roston, Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 34.

¹¹ W. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 200.

¹² N. Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (New York: Atheneum, 1966), 226.

¹³ J. Warton, An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope (London: Dodsley, 1782), I, 347.

¹⁴ G. Tillotson, Pope and Human Nature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 18.

¹⁵ S. Johnson, "Pope" in Lives of the English Poets (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), II, 233.

¹⁶ The images may be found as follows:

"Byass": "Similitudes (a) Of the Byass of a Bowl" in Lines added to Wycherley's Poems (1706-1710);

reappearing in The Dunciad Variorum, 1, 147ff. (1728)

and in The Dunciad, 1, 169ff. (1743).

The "Great Turk": "Couplets on Wit", I (1715);
 also appearing in "Atticus" in Characters, 11-12
 (1715);
 reappearing in "Fragments of a Satire", 47-48
 (1727)
 and in Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 197-198
 (1731-1734).

Hogs: "Couplets on Wit", V (1715);
 reappearing in Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II,
 171-180 (1738).

Lead: in "Similitudes (b) Of the Weights of a
 Clock" in Lines added to Wycherley's Poems
 (1706-1710);
 reappearing in The Dunciad Variorum, I, 179-180
 (1728)
 and in The Dunciad, I, 183-184 (1743).

¹⁷ Consider the extent to which Pope draws on Homer,
 Horace, Jeremy Taylor, Young and Dryden, to name only a
 few, for images.

¹⁸ The Twickenham note regards Chloe as "probably
 a last minute addition"; Calypso derives very closely
 from "Sylvia: a Fragment", written at an unknown date
 but published in 1727, well before the composition of
Epistle to a Lady (1732-1734).

¹⁹ Letter to Arbuthnot, 26 July 1734, quoted in
 G. Tillotson, On the Poetry of Pope, 163.

²⁰ J. Addison in The Spectator, 10 September 1711,

p. 307, in The Spectator, J. Addison et al., ed. G. G. Smith (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1911), I.

²¹ Including Pope's: see his "To Mr. Addison, Occasioned by his Dialogues on Medals" (especially lines 45 to 52), which celebrates the role of the scholar in maintaining the accessibility of ancient arts; and The Dunciad, II, 305-310, where the ephemeral nature of the nameless writers' works is considered reason for a sneer.

²² Consider the second painting of Mariage à la Mode: the impact of the painting is largely derived from the signs of the party of the night before; the moral is conveyed mainly by signs of the evil consequences - the unpaid bills, and the broken sword prefiguring the Earl's own death.

²³ See S. Johnson, op. cit., 238.

²⁴ G. Tillotson, On the Poetry of Pope, 25.

²⁵ N. Ault, New Light on Pope (London: Methuen, 1949), 85.

²⁶ J. Spence, An Essay on Mr Pope's Odyssey - quoted in O'Neill, op. cit., 12.

²⁷ See S. Johnson, op. cit., 308.

²⁸ Not even quite pictorial stasis: as Mack observes, comparing Donne's use of the couplet with that of the Augustans, "the closed couplet exercises on images a peculiarly muting or subordinating influence" in Pope especially, in that its imagery in the literal sense is compounded with all the associative and auditory features and turned into a more complex whole.

See M. Mack, "'Wit and Poetry and Pope': Some Observations on his Imagery" in Pope and his Contemporaries: Essays presented to George Sherburn, ed. L. A. Landa and J. L. Clifford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 24.

Chapter One: The Epistle to Cobham and the Statement of the Themes

As a poetic portraitist, Pope had many concerns - to explore, instruct, remedy, and at times to scourge humanity and its institutions. These concerns will be treated as they emerge in their different ways in the course of this examination; but for the present, since their common material is man, "The proper study of Mankind" (Essay on Man, II, 2), it would seem reasonable to begin with a look at the poem in which Pope most perspicuously deals with humanity and the human situation: the Epistle to Cobham, first of Warburton's so-called Moral Essays. This is not the earliest of the works I mean to consider, but the combined vigour and clarity it possesses make it particularly valuable for a general assessment both of what Pope was either approaching or accepting as a defining framework prior to 1730, or expanding subsequently in his later verse.

The Epistle to Cobham, "Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men" as the argument subtitles it, begins with the adumbration of a paradox central to an appreciation both of Pope's outlook on human nature and of the artistic achievements to which this contributes; the factual and scientific, and the aesthetic which may be drawn from it. This paradox appears at first to be insoluble, as

indeed it may be both in the immediate context of Pope's poetry and in a broader philosophical sense: human nature is apparently unknowable, since the means of approaching it are in opposition to each other; study produces a knowledge of generalized principles applicable to a phenomenon it excludes experience of, while personal observation tends to produce an egocentric and similarly inaccurate opinion. Both unscientific, these two outcomes appear to deny the possibility of a single rational methodology to be applied to the study of human nature; they do, however, generate a very productive intellectual and emotional tension, which Pope develops in the first half of the poem. Although not yet concerned with portraiture, the first half of the epistle leads up to the portraits of the second and supplies a useful introduction to those of other poems.

In the opening lines of the epistle Pope supports what appears to be a view current in a running debate between Cobham and himself:

Yes, you despise the man to Books confin'd,
Who from his study rails at human kind;

(1-2).

His reasons for sharing this contempt are that the scholar in question at best "may advance / Some gen'ral maxims, or be right by chance" (3-4). These alternatives are expressed in a subtly ambiguous syntax which half suggests an equation of the two. The primary sense, that

from an abstract study one may advance either vague generalizations or the occasional randomly reached truth, is qualified, almost unconsciously, by the secondary sense which is implied by the possibility that "or" is simply introducing a synonym, being "right by chance", for its predecessor, the "gen'ral maxims". The way in which lines 3 to 4 read supports the latter sense: "Tho' what he learns, // he speaks // and may advance". In line 3 one pauses strongly on "learns", obedient to the comma and to the sense of the line, and more lightly before "and"; the second pause is necessary to make plain the different objects of the verbs "speaks" and "may advance". Line 4, however, the second line of the couplet, one automatically tends to read more swiftly to find the rhyme and finish the sense unit; one is inclined by the enjambment to hurry on toward the object of the verb, which continues the acceleration effected by the diminishing pauses of line 3. As a result of this hastening, one reads the comma in line 4 -

Some gen'ral maxims, or be right by chance

- less as an audible pause between alternatives listed in a spoken line, and more as a grammatical division indicating a similarity between the two halves of the line. Lexically, generalizations and chance accuracies have their distinct and individual meanings; in the context of the verse the two are rendered, if not quite equal,

at least equivalent.

A similar effect may be noticed in the lines describing the parrot, as I presume the "coxcomb bird" must be:

The coxcomb bird, so talkative and grave,
That from his cage cries Cuckold, Whore, and Knave,
Tho' many a passenger he rightly call,
You hold him no Philosopher at all.

(5-8)

By an interruption of the expected syntax, line 5 makes one rush the second line of the couplet in an attempt to find the sense of the whole. To clarify: "The coxcomb bird", which one might expect to have as the subject of the sentence, is followed not by a main verb but by attributive adjectives which briefly check the syntax, and in so doing are read as a single unit, so that only upon reflection does the vagueness, or even mutual opposition of parts, in "talkative and grave" become apparent; in line 6, as the usual attraction of the rhyme draws the eye along, one reads the relative clause in the hope of finding out what the bird actually does in the sentence, and hence one reads his utterances as if they were a single derisive cry, which they cannot really be if one pays more deliberate attention to the lexical senses: a cuckold is not a vicious creature, while "whore" and "knave" are terms usually applied to members of opposite sexes. The three words are never

coveted titles, but this abstract and theoretical common feature is all they share; they may therefore be suitably grouped together by the verse as the railing of the bird in its cage or "the man to Books confin'd" (especially if the books in question are farces, the most likely literature to class the three together). In so weakening the distinction between the classes, Pope admirably demonstrates the perils of "gen'ral maxims" upon the passers-by: such lack of definition is hardly philosophical. Tellingly, lines 7 to 8 leave the bird still without a predicate:

Tho' many a passenger he rightly call,
You hold him no Philosopher at all.

The lines break off with an anacoluthonic shrug and leave the parrot helpless in the thick of the asyntactic nominals of the previous couplet.

With line 9, Pope proceeds to set up the paradox I have mentioned:

And yet the fate of all extremes is such,
Men may be read, as well as Books too much.

(9-10)

If scholarly learning may lack genuine relation to the outside world of experience, and hence lose its perception of the individual nature of the subjects it comments on, by not taking our knowledge of human nature at second hand, we unfortunately lose the objectivity or dis-

interest of the abstract inquirer:

To Observations which ourselves we make,
We grow more partial for th' observer's sake;
(11-12).

These "Observations" are in fact mistermmed, since if the scholar's maxims are drawn from "Notions", the "Observations" are the products of "Guess"; and since both a guess and a notion are of the mind's own creation, rather than a rational deduction from reality. The common result of either extreme is a failure to reach any true understanding or appreciation of one's subject; a depressing Weltanschauung for anyone in search of a single universally valid outlook. The verse, however, denies the possibility of despair to the reader. Despite the connotations of the first fourteen lines, the tone is too light to indicate, or permit, a universal pessimism. Lines 15 to 18 make it plain that Pope's mockery is aimed at extremism and its impoverishing effect on knowledge rather than at the actual modes of perception which certain practitioners may carry too far or value disproportionately:

There's some Peculiar in each leaf and grain,
Some unmark'd fibre, or some varying vein:
Shall only Man be taken in the gross?
Grant but as many sorts of Mind as Moss.
(15-18)

The fact that man is by implication not to be "taken in the gross" suggests that he is still to be "taken" or studied; and the very texture of lines 15 to 16 displays an unjaded outlook:

There's some Peculiar in each leaf and grain,
Some unmark'd fibre, or some varying vein:...

The couplet beautifully combines the two elements previously discussed; its list-like quality to some extent accommodates the book-learning outlook with its use of the twice repeated "some" as a type of labelling or filing marker, while the rapid changes of pace prevent the list from becoming an indiscriminate cry of "Cuckold, Whore and Knave"; thus the failure of abstract itemization is redeemed in the concrete. Consider the smooth flow of the monosyllables of line 15, speeded along by the word "Peculiar", whose continuation from the second to the third foot slightly hurries one towards the more deliberate "leaf and grain", whose strong iambic positions render them quite distinct and, in fact, peculiar:

There's some/Pecu/liar in/each leaf/and grain
(15).

Or there is the greater rhythmic complexity of line 16, with the slow pace it has until the comma, occasioned by the prosodic ambiguity of "unmark'd", which one is drawn to read as a spondee (as it would be stressed in prose) and as a trochee (to fit the pentameter), and then the acceleration of "or some varying vein", with

its free flowing regular scansion ("varying" is of doubtful prosodic quality, but its hint of a third syllable serves only to speed the line along, and does not disrupt the verse) and the alliterative fricatives of "varying vein". The versification itself insists that the principle of individual identity cannot be easily erased.

The texture of this portion of the epistle - approximately until line 28 - considerably augments the feeling of complexity and awareness of all the numberless goings-on of life. In the lines

Add Nature's, Custom's, Reason's, Passion's strife,
And all Opinion's colours cast on life
(21-22)

Pope changes the range of ideas with every striving noun of line 21, none of which is permitted to dominate the rest; despite a prevalent iambic metre, each capitalized noun is a trochee, without the stability to resist the jostling of the verse. Nature, custom, reason and passion all overlap two feet in the line:

Add Nat/ure's, Cus/tom's, Rea/son's, Pass/ion's strife,.

By contrast the second line of the couplet races one along without check from punctuation until the line ends on the word "life", the very phenomenon the impulses of the psyche are intended to explain, but which

they simply colour. The verse at this stage is constantly aware of the sheer variety of life. In the lines

Or Fancy's beam enlarges, multiplies,
Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dyes
(27-28)

the various functions of the beam are chiefly expansive in line 27, but by the end of line 28 without a pause in the rush of verbs, are sharply turned to reduction and distortion. The catalogue of human experiences which may intrude on perception has reached a confusing abstraction similar in tone to the rejected oversimplifications which open the poem. It is difficult to remember the actual subject in the conglomeration of nature, custom, reason, passion, opinion, manners, passion again and fancy. What must surely be admitted, however, is the importance of awareness of this variety; that each of these functions of human nature is a significant part of the whole. The satirist's distrust of human capabilities is certainly present in these lines, but there is also such drive that one may be excused the suspicion that Pope actually enjoys the multiple variations. If human study is open to a number of frustrations, the vitality of the subject it approaches can be directly experienced, and the experience can be artificially reproduced. The poem continues to develop the tensions between the difficulties of intellectual observ-

ation and the excitement of experience. In lines 29 to 32 the sense is one of continued frustration, but the tone is varied and exhilarated:

Our depth who fathoms, or our shallows finds,
Quick whirls, and shifting eddies, of our minds?
Life's stream for Observation will not stay,
It hurries all too fast to mark their way.

(29-32)

The same typical multiplicity is present in these lines as well; consider the weighty start to line 29, the sonorous "fathoms", which becomes the lighter "shallows finds", and thence proceeds to the abrupt opening spondee of line 30; the "Quick whirls" in turn giving place to the unfixed trochees of the "shifting eddies", which sound quite as formless as their lexical sense indicates they are; and so finally to the expressed direct metaphor of the Heraclitean stream, whose slow introduction - the double "s" of "Life's stream", at once slowing the pace, particularly in conjunction with the deliberately polysyllabic quality of "Observation" - does not fulfil the reader's expectations, but rather "hurries all too fast to mark their way" in regular tripping iambics hastened by the hinted onomatopoeia of "hurries" and the streamlined cliché "all too fast", which is apprehended in toto after the first word. At once the verse admits the lack of any fixed point to base observation on, and replaces it with the

subjective experience of the subject. The plurality is patently that of the river one cannot twice step into, and it is only by an artistic technique of apprehending and recording the experience that the stream can effectively be stopped for observation. Pope's very interest in paradox and his response to the variety of experience allowed him to make such an artistic record. Comparing Pope to Walpole, Mack remarks that both possessed the gift of

recognizing the flux, variety, and disorderliness of experience ... allowing ample room and verge enough for change, whim, prejudice, hunch, and also for the mole of nature, the growth of some complexion, the stamp of some defect that may be at once our energizer and destroyer....¹

Tillotson, too, quotes Tennyson as saying

Pope here and there has a real insight into Nature, for example about the spider, which "Feels at each thread and lives along the line".²

Taking the potential of an art responding to and capturing observed experience, it becomes possible to construct another approach to the study of human nature: in effect, producing a type of case-history or portrait, and testing it against known facts. This

partially conflicts with Pope's own view of his methodology, which he implies takes the form of assuming the existence of a "Ruling Passion" and trying to find out which form of this suits the portrait he draws; but as I shall attempt to show, Pope's theory and practice were capable of substantial divergence in this. Pope himself observes that "In vain the Sage, with retrospective eye,/Would from th' apparent What conclude the Why" (51-52). In the lines that follow he demonstrates the weaknesses of the attempt to do this: the same primary cause may have different effects, similar effects may have different causes.

Behold! If Fortune or a Mistress frowns,
Some plunge in bus'ness, others shave their crowns:
To ease the Soul of one oppressive weight,
This quits an Empire, that embroils a State:
(55-58).

The patterning of the couplets is similar in both cases: one common cause - a frown of a lover or of circumstances, or some distress of the spirit - in both couplets produces two very different - in line 58 even contrary - possible outcomes. Each cause, frown or "one oppressive weight", forks out into different possibilities as one reads the second line of the couplet. A closer reading suggests a divergence even within the causes themselves; or if not a divergence from the first sense, at least an ambivalence within that sense: the "one oppressive weight" which leads

the individual to so unpredictable a reaction can be either the metaphoric frown of fortune, or the more literal one of a mistress; the vagueness of the verb "frowns" embodies the difficulty, if not impossibility, of finding a single cause of actions. Such similarity as there is between the two frowns still prompts very different responses from "this" and "that", "some" and "others".

The seeming absence of cause and effect in human psychology can become downright mutual negation: "Who does a kindness, is not therefore kind" (62). To distinguish men into types by actions alone produces a potentially false vision; one may detect an echo in "is not therefore kind" of the sense "of a kind"; doing a kindness need not indicate that one is of the generous "kind"; as the same cause in lines 55 to 56 produces different results, so the seemingly similar result of kindness can be produced by different causes - a kindness thus as ambivalent as the "one oppressive weight", whose "one"-ness varies from individual to individual:

Perhaps Prosperity becalm'd his breast,

Perhaps the Wind just shifted from the east:

(63-64).

Throughout the paradoxical catalogue of men who are not what they are, cause and effect continue to be marked by this same ambivalence: humility is a form of pride,

fear accompanies bravery:

Not therefore humble he who seeks retreat,
 Pride guides his steps, and bids him shun the great:
 Who combats bravely is not therefore brave,
 He dreads a death-bed like the meanest slave:
 (65-68).

The quality of even a single feature of the psyche changes radically in one line: "Who reasons wisely is not therefore wise" (69), where to be wise is in the first instance to enjoy good argumentative powers, in the second to have the broader knowledge or practical ability to apply rational conclusions to real life. The two types of wisdom, in their interdependence for significance, remind the reader again of the inevitable interrelatedness of all things. Actions must be judged in context that they might "best discover man" (70) and above all they must be considered together in one personality, to avoid the inconsistencies of having "the few that glare" (73) oversimplify and destroy the character:

What will you do with such as disagree?
 Suppress them half, or call them Policy?
 Must then at once (the character to save)
 The plain rough Hero turn a crafty Knave?
 Alas! in truth the man but chang'd his mind,
 Perhaps was sick, in love, or had not din'd.
 (75-80)

In lines 76 to 78 the attempt is made to suit all actions

to a mathematically precise character of as much validity as the "Observations" of lines 9 to 14:

To Observations which ourselves we make,
We grow more partial for th' observer's sake;
(11-12).

All three lines (76-78) use a similar bipartite division: line 76 breaks approximately in half with the comma after the same word, "half", neither of the contending alternatives quite dominating; line 77 is similarly poised on the first bracket, which, with the broken syntax, forces a slowing of pace, emphasizing the irony of the word "character", a dramatic rather than a psychological one which is to make the "plain rough Hero" become an equally oversimple "crafty Knave". These two terms again weigh similarly against each other in their own sections of the line. Notice the monosyllabic adjectives, "plain" and "rough", given to the bisyllabic "Hero", set against a disyllabic adjective and monosyllabic noun, "crafty Knave", which stresses the different elements composing the two fictions while preserving a balanced equivalence between them. The exclamatory "Alas!" allows the voice of common sense to break out of this deceptive oversimplification and the broken lines. Line 79 follows with a wonderful uninterrupted conversational flow which laughs away the conflicting explanations attempted:

Alas! in truth the man but chang'd his mind,

and, thus prepared for, the following line launches into another list of quite distinct and varied possibilities in parody of the previous attempted reductions:

Perhaps was sick, in love, or had not din'd.

(80)

The rhythmic values change with a disorienting speed after the balanced oversimplifications of the preceding lines.

Pope has, by this stage, taken a philosophical study of his subject about as far as he can; indeed, considering the difficulties he encounters in An Essay on Man, it may be a pleasant surprise to realise how clearly Pope has set forth his problem; but it is a problem to which no empirical philosopher has ever found a full solution. Further inquiry into the question of how humanity is to be studied will have to be effected through somewhat different means. The texture of the verse hitherto has been remarkably sensitive in tracing different types of response to the variety of life; but the extremes of abstract response have been thoroughly examined and convincingly repudiated in a manner with which most historians of philosophy would probably sympathize; it hardly takes a great poet to see what amazing capacities for pseudo-rationality humankind possesses. A more immediate form of poetic engagement with life appears necessary.

Such an engagement is supplied by the increasingly direct representation of character which the epistle now starts moving towards. Pope begins with an initial group of satiric and stereotypic summaries of characters in official roles in the persons of the "Saint", "Judge", "Chanc'lor", "Gownman", "Bishop", "Minister" and "King" (87-92). These could be called portraits only facetiously; even the "Characters" Pope calls them is a misleading word. The inhabitants of this "high Life" are caricatures, not characters.³ Likewise the stereotypes of lines 103 to 109 are mainly concerned with oversimplification. The soldier and the clerk are virtually equated by their closely similar rhythms and related alliteration:

Tom struts a Soldier, open, bold, and brave;
Will sneaks a Sriv'ner, an exceeding knave:

(105-106).

These caricatures and stereotypes may be best accounted for as preparations for the introduction of genuine poetic characters, either real people presented in the verse as they are experienced, or fictional characters composed of observed psychological traits:

... gracious CHANDOS is belov'd at sight,
And ev'ry child hates Shylock, tho' his soul
Still sits at squat, and peeps not from its hole.
At half mankind when gen'rous Manly raves,
All know 'tis Virtue, for he thinks them knaves:
When universal homage Umbra pays,

All see 'tis Vice, and itch of vulgar praise.
 When Flatt'ry glares, all hate it in a Queen,
 While one there is who charms us with his Spleen.

(113-121)

The characters mentioned are all readily apprehensible; as one reads one knows instinctively how each is to be reacted to. Unfortunately these are not only simple types - even the simplest - but on top of this the very simplicity of the characters has a quality of deliberate indefiniteness and ambiguity (as distinct from an accidental vagueness) about it. The examples Pope gives are based in paradox.

Others so very close, they're hid from none;

(111)

and in nearly inapprehensible concepts

So Darkness strikes the sense...

(112),

both of which lines require much thought before their sense can be apprehended, and both of which one absorbs intuitively before one has worked out their rational sense. As simple units or ideas the "plain Characters" may be readily apprehensible, but these very units are, if analysed, founded in compounds of paradox and in ambiguity; their seeming plainness is the effect not of simplicity, but of mere familiarity. They are human types we may not entirely understand, but which we are

accustomed to. The paradoxes perplex because they arise from the conflict of our expectations and reality itself; they become acceptable when reality is captured by art, and the shortcomings of these expectations are exposed.

Notwithstanding this paradoxical quality, and perhaps even because of it, Pope achieves a directness of realization and communication of ideas even in these brief sketches which augurs well for future developments of poetic portraiture. Manly:

At half mankind when gen'rous Manly raves,
All know 'tis Virtue, for he thinks them knaves:

(116-117).

These two lines turn out to be remarkably dense when one attempts to fit exact sense to the effects one has intuited. Line 116 begins with the broad sweep of "At half mankind", strangely and strongly positioned before subject or verb, giving the raving considerably more force than a conventional "When gen'rous Manly at half mankind raves". This extra force is used in the next line, when the "half" gives place to "All", the seemingly contradictory concepts being related by their similar initial placing in their respective lines. The significance of this relation is made clear by the ambiguous "them" at the end of the couplet - "for he thinks them knaves" - referring to "half mankind", as

readily applying to the nearer "All". To reconcile the two one has to consider a less obvious sense of "half", allowing it to mean not half the number of human beings, but half of humanity itself, that vicious portion in the soul of Everyman which offends the "gen'rous" ("noble" as well as "bounteous" - in invective!) in Manly, whose name Pope presumably borrowed from Wycherley to indicate the admirable qualities making up the other "half mankind". Through an immediate and concrete example of a human character, Pope achieves an extraordinary degree of successful abstraction.

Umbra too moves from specific to general by similar means:

When universal homage Umbra pays,
All know 'tis Vice, and itch of vulgar praise.

(118-119)

Here again the first line of the couplet inverts the idiomatic word order, and again the movement from the immediate to the general occurs; in this case, from Umbra's particular fawning to the universal reaction; as Manly's railing touches everyone's vice, so Umbra revolts everyone's virtue even while trying to flatter it. Interesting, in passing, is the ambiguity of the latter section of line 119; "itch", read as a verb, can indicate the irritation that Umbra produces; as a noun, it becomes a quality of Umbra himself. Hence Umbra,

like Manly, is linked with his audience (and by a slight extrapolation, with his reader as well) through the "itch" which in him is a prurient desire to be gratified, and in the relatively virtuous reader to be resisted but nonetheless recognized.

These are, nonetheless, simple cases by virtue of their stereotypic nature; their familiarity renders them easily apprehensible. This use of types has its own dangers; Manly and Umbra are described in tellingly similar terms, each being introduced by a temporal, each being referred to his attitude to mankind, and each's audience reaction being expressed through an identical syntax. There are lexical and moral differences between the two, but the oversimplification these characters may represent, since "these plain Characters we rarely find" (122), brings them dangerously towards that intellectual blurring and mutual confusion already frequently noticed. If they are apprehensible, they nonetheless have their dangers, and only as relatively simple cases are they so readily understood through a form of poetic intuition - perhaps best considered as a type of applied memory - possessed by most readers.

Pope now proceeds to set up an array of more difficult characters which distinguish a single man at different times:

See the same man, in vigour, in the gout;
 Alone, in company; in place, or out;
 Early at Bus'ness, and at Hazard late;
 Mad at a Fox-chace, wise at a Debate;
 Drunk at a Borough, civil at a Ball,
 Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall.

(130-135)

These are personified contrarieties, leading from the
 sarcastic

But, sage historians! 'tis your task to prove
 One action Conduct; one, heroic Love

(85-86)

to Pope's practical vindication of Aristotle's dictum
 that poetry is a better guide to truth than history;
 and at last we reach what are distinctly poetic portraits:

Catius is ever moral, ever grave,
 Thinks who endures a knave, is next a knave,
 Save just at dinner - then prefers, no doubt,
 A Rogue with Ven'son to a Saint without.

(136-139)

Presented as history this would be no more than a
 strange inconsistency of character; as Pope handles it,
 the case becomes entirely credible on the human level.
 The deliberate, repetitive listing of Catius' public
 qualities, as they could be called, in the stately
 iambics of line 136 builds him, although in miniature,
 into a "Character", complete with admirable sentiments
 rendered almost tangible by the texture of the verse;

history itself assists the poetic effect by the harmony between the modern Catus and the historical Cato, who occurs often in Pope as a stereotypic symbol of integrity:⁴ both the historical type and the fictional character share the expressed sentiment "who endures a knave, is next a knave"; but the fictional Catus can accommodate inconsistency and remain quite credible when Pope reminds us of human requirements - "Save just at dinner" - with which stroke Catus is enduring a knave "with Ven'son" and hence "next a knave", either being a knave in his turn, as good as a knave, or so literally "next a knave" that he is asking him to pass the gravy.

The portrait Pope draws of Patritio is of more complex artistry. In six lines he presents an extraordinarily tightly structured character:

Who would not praise Patritio's high desert,
His hand unstain'd, his uncorrupted heart,
His comprehensive head! all Int'rests weigh'd,
All Europe sav'd, yet Britain not betray'd.
He thanks you not, his pride is in Piquette,
New-market-fame, and judgment at a Bett.

(140-145)

Or, rather, two characters; Patritio's public image is first described by much the same listing which marked the vulgar oversimplification of lines 101 and following ("Tis Education forms the common mind..."); the

"common mind" in Patritio's case - "common" both as the popular image of a good statesman, and as what the mob thinks a common character in all those rare creatures - is listed almost mechanically as a series of attributes:

His hand unstain'd, his uncorrupted heart,
His comprehensive head!

(141-142)

Of similar value to the "his" in each case is the "all" of the following lines:

... all int'rests weigh'd,
All Europe sav'd ...

(142-143).

One runs one's eye over the list as one reads, pausing slightly at the exclamation mark, but then hastening on again as one obeys the urge to finish the line, the couplet, and the syntax one expects to find eventually among the absolute constructions. This listing, however, is strongly broken in on by the intrusion of the Patritian ego: "He thanks you not" (144) in monosyllables heavy after the flowing list preceding. The popular figure is uncivilly dispelled, and there is a brief pause; then one is hastened off afresh by a new, vigorous, or at least compelling, list of characteristic qualities and activities:

... his pride is in Picquette,
New-market-fame, and judgment at a Bett.

(144-145)

Patritio's own view of himself is in turn a listing of nominals, another collection of commonplaces, yet between the two confusing spates of "Life's stream" which make up the portrait, even in the apparent paradox a remarkable character is generated; both the patriot and the gambler are vividly realised through Pope's sensitivity to variety, and it is in the actual uneasiness of the tension between the two that the most forceful and individual glimpse of the man himself appears, qualified in part by both the popular and private views of his character, and yet, being prevented by each from appearing to the reader as a reduced or caricatured figure, a whole man existing in the midst of the forces which constitute human nature, artistically and imaginatively fixed for consideration. Perhaps the stream of life "for Observation will not stay", but the artist's eye has here shown itself capable of apprehending and reproducing its action for subsequent study. With Patritio, a fairly simple subject for all his complex features, Pope confines himself to this form of recording without expressed philosophical or psychological comment; even so, however, he says more about human nature in these three couplets than he often manages to argue out in thirty lines of more formal philosophy in An Essay on Man.

After the complexity - or perhaps subtlety would be a better term for it - of the portrayal of Patritio,

one might suspect Pope of working towards his own theory de hominvm natvra. The idea of the "Ruling Passion" (henceforth indicated without quotation marks) is indeed soon to be advanced, but prior to this Pope again affirms his determination to avoid the reductive or formulaic, listing a number of minor contrarities in characters, especially those of Scoto and the atheist (lines 158 to 161, and 162 to 165), and once again reminding the reader of the paradox and complexity inherent in so much of life:

Manners with Fortunes, Humours turn with Climes,
Tenets with Books, and Principles with Times.

Judge we by Nature? Habit can efface,
Int'rest o'ercome, or Policy take place:
By Actions? those Uncertainty divides:
By Passions? these Dissimulation hides:
Opinions? they still take a wider range:
Find, if you can, in what you cannot change.

(166-173)

The hypothetical guides to judgment are heavily outnumbered by all the factors that may confuse it: "Fortune", "Climes", "Books", "Times", "Habit", "Int'rest", "Policy", "Uncertainty", "Dissimulation". All these influences impinge upon philosophical judgment - if anything, the list is far too simple; Pope could be accused of merely trying to tie the argument down in assigning various qualifiers to various standards, since any of the one list could easily apply to any of the other. For all this, "Life's

stream for Observation will not stay"; but by this stage we may have been shown a way out of the predicament. If "God and Nature only are the same:/In Man, the judgment shoots at flying game" (154-155), there may yet be a possibility of hitting the target. The same hunting is essayed at the beginning of An Essay on Man:

Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;

Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies ...

(Epistle I, 9-10, 13).

But although carrying out the hunt at all suggests some prospect of success, in the Essay Pope tries too hard to bring down a partridge with the heavy artillery of a logical methodology he does not wholly understand. By the time of the epistles to Cobham and Martha Blount his weapon is rather the more suitable fowling piece of artistic intuition:

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wand'ring touch, or some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right

(Epistle to a Lady,

151-154).

The "stroke", be it that of the artist's pencil or of the hunter's weapon, is itself here airborne in pursuit of the flying quarry: taking on some of the qualities

of his subject, Pope can sympathetically "hit 'em right"; and once this technique has extracted a constant image from the whirlpool of confused components, a fairly scientific inquiry becomes practical - one based, for instance, on a method of testing hypotheses against known data. The Ruling Passion is at first sight another baffling anomaly:

There alone,
The Wild are constant, and the Cunning known;
The Fool consistent, and the False sincere;
(174-176).

These lines appear at first to posit merely another series of frustrating self-contradictions. Certainly the claim for the existence of a single dominant emotional tendency could not be drawn from the changing stream of life Pope has set up; but given the resting space of an apprehended and captured image or portrait one may assess and redefine terms, allowing the fool to be consistent in folly, the false sincere by his own standards of duplicity.

It is easy to find fault with any of the more formulated arguments for the Ruling Passion Pope advances. He introduces the notion bluntly, never questioning whether it has any existence in the real world. As Johnson has it,

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible,
the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human
characters are by no means constant

Johnson defines Pope's concept as "... an original direction of desire to some particular object, an innate affection which gives all action an innate and invariable tendency ...".⁵ Such a definition would suit the Ruling Passion if it existed; but it is also essentially applicable to what is a fundamental quality of human experience: the tendency to choose what is seen as being immediately or ultimately the most agreeable option. Epistle IV of An Essay on Man begins with the apostrophe

Oh Happiness! our being's end and aim!
 Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name:
 That something still which prompts th'eternal sigh,
 For which we bear to live, or dare to die ...

(1-4).

The Ruling Passion is implied in these lines, but it has a subordinate role; the urge to self-gratification is at once a pursuit of virtue ("Good" and "Content" in Pope's terms) and a practice of vice ("Pleasure" and "Ease"); its effects in line 4 are fortitude and courage, whatever the cause. Johnson viewed Pope's theory with distrust, as tending to a destructive belief in moral determinism; but the suggestion of the lines above is rather that the Passion should be largely identical with the individual conception of happiness, even another form of conscience. The majority of the psychological cases Pope advances in support of his theory are absurd or failures; but to understand this one need only bear in mind the tendency to such a tone of the satiric idiom he works in; it need

not be inferred that the results of the Ruling Passion must be malignant. Satire concentrates on weakness, as does humour to some extent; but the conclusions both reach usually imply an inverse function of strength, unexpressed but potential, rather as Addison's pedigree of Falsehood is offset by a pedigree of Truth.⁶ I shall examine the implications of satiric and humorous modes in more detail when looking at the issues of sense and corrective satire in later chapters; for the present it is sufficient to recognize that the Ruling Passion is for Pope primarily a single expression of the forces of human motivation, allowing a halt to the polemic exploration of principles, and a fresh start with the second main section of the epistle, the portait gallery:⁷

Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
 Whose ruling Passion was the Lust of Praise;
 Born with whate'er could win it from the Wise,
 Women and Fools must like him or he dies;
 Tho' wond'ring Senates hung on all he spoke,
 The Club must hail him master of the joke.
 Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
 He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.
 Then turns repentant, and his God adores
 With the same spirit that he drinks and whores;
 Enough if all around him but admire,
 And now the Punk applaud, and now the Fryer.

Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
 And wanting nothing but an honest heart;
 Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,
 And most contemptible, to shun contempt;
 His Passion still, to covet gen'ral praise,
 His Life, to forfeit it a thousand ways;
 A constant Bounty which no friend has made;
 An angel Tongue, which no man can persuade;
 A Fool, with more of Wit than half mankind,
 Too quick for Thought, for Action too refin'd:
 A Tyrant to the wife his heart approves;
 A Rebel to the very king he loves;
 He dies, sad out-cast of each church and state,
 And (harder still) flagitious, yet not great!
 Ask you why Wharton broke thro' ev'ry rule?
 'Twas all for fear the Knaves should call him Fool.

(180-207)

This lengthy portrait must surely be one of the portions
 of the epistle most confused, in an almost literal sense;
 the antitheses pour together inconsistency upon baffling
 inconsistency. Wharton eludes any fixed identity, whatever
 standards one applies: in his pursuit of praise he lacks
 any criteria for evaluating its worth, having neither
 the intellectual, social, nor religious means:

Born with whate'er could win it from the Wise,
 Women and Fools must like him, or he dies;

(182-183)

Tho' wond'ring Senates hung on all he spoke,
 The Club must hail him master of the joke
 (184-185);

Then turns repentant, and his God adores
 With the same spirit that he drinks and whores;
 (188-189).

In each of these cases Wharton's desire for universal praise makes that same praise meaningless if obtained; "Wise" and "Women and Fools", "Senates" and "Club", and above all the brutally rhymed "God adores" and "drinks and whores" all cancel each other out as possible definites in Wharton's character. Whenever the man is related to an external, this proves to be only a negative definer, some further thing he will fail at: to be both Tully and Wilmot is impossible, and all the reader can be sure of is that Wharton will succeed at neither (apart from anything else, one does not "shine" in the same way as a statesman and a wit); as likewise he will not have "now the Punk applaud, and now the Fryer" in the easy alternation which line 191 suggests.

This self-defeating trait is not confined to Wharton's life as a public figure; within himself he is equally paradoxical and self-contradictory, having "each gift of nature and of art,/ And wanting nothing but an honest heart" (192-193). The latter shortcoming renders meaningless all other accomplishments and faculties; "Grown all to all", he is ironically given a

suggestion of the great and expansive, except that being "from no one vice exempt" he cancels any claim to virtues, and the inspiring sounding "all to all" becomes a jibe and no more.

Despite the confusion and conflict, Wharton remains intelligible. Once all his contradictory psychological principles are recorded, the element common to all, his "Lust of Praise", may be observed and abstracted, and thereafter evaluated, being shown to be worthless when in line 204 "He dies", performing the only action the syntax has allowed him since line 190. Prior even to this line Wharton is impotent; the main verbs describe either the actions of things relative to Wharton, or at best his attempts or desires: "He'll shine", or "turns repentant". In the attempt to gratify his desire for universal praise, without reference to the external world, Wharton's selfishness betrays itself.

And (harder still) flagitious, yet not great!

(205)

since any greatness the self may attain is dissipated into nothingness unless it is equipped not only with "Self-love, to urge", but also with "Reason, to restrain" (An Essay on Man, II, 54); its associated quality of the flagitious, which Wharton's mind by implication sees as the cause of greatness, modifies that greatness to the same sterile type we shall see in Atticus, and still more in Timon and Atossa. Lacking the restraint of any focussed

rational or moral purpose, Wharton is dissipated amongst conflicting desires, and dies in the supreme irony of being an egotist without an ego.

The psychology embodied in Wharton's portrait is at once concentrated and sensitive, and it is in fact the better for being less closely linked than Pope intends to Wharton's alleged Ruling Passion. There are two good reasons for this; one is that lust of praise could not be such a passion, as Johnson observes, since such a desire is meaningful only in a social state:

... there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man therefore can be born in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where money does not exist

The desire for praise must therefore be a manifestation in the social setting of a more basic condition of the psyche, rather than a dominant force of character.⁸

The second reason for treating the Ruling Passion as a relatively minor force in Wharton's case is a little more oblique: the defining qualities of Wharton's character may be found in a literary predecessor, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Dryden's Achitophel. Here as in Wharton a rampant egotism frustrates and destroys the ego itself by denying the external world which can satisfy that ego. To Wharton it is the same to whore or adore; similarly unable to perceive the important

distinctions between facets of the external world save where they relate directly to him Achitophel is "Resolv'd to Ruine or to Rule the State".⁹ Likewise he negates the significance of his skill as statesman-pilot by valuing his own performance above his country's good; Wharton too, "for a Calm unfit,/Would Steer too nigh the Sands to boast his Wit".¹⁰ Dryden, however, is not arguing a philosophical theory; Achitophel shares Wharton's vanity, but for Dryden this is merely an implicit part of the character. Following Dryden's lead, Pope attempts to attach a pet theory to the portrait; but in essentials the character's motives have changed little from 1681 to 1730. Pope adds a further dimension of psychological complexity; there are qualities of insight in the characters of the 1730-1734 epistles which were beyond Dryden; but these do not consist in the theory of the Ruling Passion as he conceived it.

Having effectively stopped "Life's stream for Observation", Pope issues a few cautionary reminders of the contributing factors influencing any action; the misunderstanding which may arise from the confusion of means and ends, and the way in which changing times change values as well (a truly Augustan point - tempores mvtantvr, et nos mvtamvr cvm eis); but when writing that the observer often "quite mistakes the scaffold for the pile" (221), Pope is using a metaphor which posits the existence of the concrete edifice, which he has indeed just convincingly demonstrated in his verse. The warnings

are principally intended to discourage the facile attachment of any Ruling Passion which appears suitable. Knowledge and human nature alike are in constant need of redefinition and qualification to suit circumstances. As the vivisector of lines 39 to 40 loses the life he is pursuing as soon as he finds it, so what Pope terms the "Ruling Passion" is at once a definer of what one is in the course of one's life, and the agent of the eventual destruction of that life: with the Priapic wreck of a man "whom want of grace/Has made the father of a nameless race" (228-229) but who continues to pursue the action which is negating his claim to be a "rev'rend sire" of bastards;¹¹ with the glutton whose broken utterance

Mercy! cries Helluo, mercy on my soul!

Is there no hope? Alas!...

ends with the free-flowing and syntactically easy

...then bring the jowl"

(236-237)

assuring one both that he dies of his appetite, and that he dies contented; and with the miserly woman whose last act both fulfils its purpose and takes her life. Maynard Mack comments on Narcissa:

One would not, sure, be frightful when one's dead -

And - Betty - give this Cheek a little Red.

(246-247)

This, to the extent that it illustrates anything, illustrates the poem's prose argument that our

ruling passion continues to our last breath. But as a metaphor it explores, not without considerable profundity, through the character of one type of woman, the character of the human predicament itself. Here we have, as her name implies, the foolish self-lover; but also ... the self-lover who inhabits each of us by virtue of our mortal situation, the very principle of identity refusing to be erased.¹²

This is as true of the "frugal Crone" whose "true Humour" is that of perception and revelation, not mere derision.¹³

Pope shows or refers to the death of many of his characters; but as I have suggested it would be a misrepresentation to maintain on this basis that the "principle of identity" Mack mentions is entirely a destroyer. What are destructive forces in satiric presentation are vital ones in humorous; consider these lines from An Essay on Man:

What crops of wit and honesty appear
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear! ...
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind:
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave;

(II, 185-186,
 189-192).

Life's objects are seemingly unattainable; they are "Still out of reach, yet never out of view" (Epistle to a Lady, 232) of a being "always to be blest" (An Essay on Man, I, 96).¹⁴ There is an ambivalence involved which it would be critically insensitive to deny; futility and continuation go together as necessary consequences of the same process. Narcissa is ridiculous in her death-bed vanity; but one need only compare her with Young's Liberia, who "snatches the dear destroyer to her arms"¹⁵ to realize that, though life may be a long disease, the disease may in Pope be the life as well.

And so the epistle draws to its end with a couple of the panegyrics which will be seen again in other works I mean to look at; but although there is unmistakably an affectionate element, possibly also respect, in the description of the courtier who

Just brought out this, when scarce his tongue could stir

"If - where I'm going - I could serve you, Sir?"

(254-255),

this effect is weakened by being immediately followed by the humorous portrayal of Euclio's death. Pope is still depressed, or at best amused, by the seeming absurdity of human motives; he has still to learn, even at this late stage (1730 to 1733) to smile at them with affection in a serious work. In the final portrait of the epistle the addressee, Viscount Cobham, is himself used in an attempt to indicate benign workings of the Ruling Passion:

And you! brave COBHAM, to the latest breath
 Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death:
 Such in those moments as in all the past,
 "Oh, save my Country, Heav'n!" shall be your last.

(262-265)

The lines, however, are a little thin; a standard Augustan eulogy rather than imaginative poetic perception; they are neither particularly dense and moving poetically, nor even historically correct. Certain qualifiers are still needed to make human motives acceptable. Nonetheless,

The reader ... is at least agreeably surprised, and appreciates that it is paradoxically in this common factor of the ruling passion that Cobham's uniqueness lies. An apparent limitation is converted into a real virtue.¹⁶

Notes

¹ M. Mack, The Garden and the City, 204.

² G. Tillotson, On the Poetry of Pope, 19.

³ The caricature is a weapon, the character a means of investigation; the first lends itself to force, the second to subtlety. An excellent eighteenth century example of the distinction is provided by Hogarth's Characters and Caricaturas. See W. Vaughan, Romantic Art (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 84.

⁴ See Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 209, taken ironically from the prologue to Addison's tragedy; and the Epistle to Bathurst, 68. It is worth noting that Cato, almost a caricature of virtue, is of negative poetic value: characters are rebuked for deviating from the example of a man who cannot himself appear as a developed character.

⁵ S. Johnson, op. cit., 279-280.

⁶ J. Addison in The Spectator, 10 April 1711, p.130, in The Spectator, J. Addison et al., ed. G. G. Smith (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1911), 1. The table itself is quoted in my next chapter.

⁷ It should be borne in mind that the Ruling Passion was less Pope's idea than a commonplace of contemporary psychological theory, which Mack traces back to Pascal via Roscommon. See Mack's note to An Essay on Man, II, 138 in the Twickenham edition. The idea might be traced on at least as far as Sterne's "hobby-horse". Pope found the idea ready-

made, and the use he made of it was to draw what he could from it, rather than working towards it as a solution.

⁸ S. Johnson, op. cit., 280. The basic condition is not named as such, and although plausible psychological guesses might be made, calling Wharton's performances extensions of courtship ritual or defensive territorial display, the effort would add nothing to our appreciation of Wharton's character.

⁹ J. Dryden, Absalom and Achitophel, 174 in Poems of John Dryden (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, nd), reprinted from The Poems of John Dryden, ed. J. Sargeant by permission of the Oxford University Press.

¹⁰ ibid. 161-162.

¹¹ But compare Absalom and Achitophel, 19-20, for a hint in Dryden of the metamorphosis of vice into virtue and vice versa which Pope is so interested in:

Whether, inspir'd by some diviner Lust,

His father got him with a greater Gust

¹² M. Mack, "'Wit and Poetry and Pope': Some Observations on his Imagery" in op. cit., 35.

¹³ Warton (op. cit., II, 140) mentions "true Humour" in the crone's case. The humour is of the kind Fowler compares with satire.

¹⁴ The elusive quality of pleasure appears in Young's treatment of the Ruling Passion, Love of Fame: The Universal Passion (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1741), 100 (no line references). Young does not appear to have shared more than glimpses of Pope's vision that "Fits give Vigour" as well

as destroying.

¹⁵ *ibid.* 108.

¹⁶ P. Dixon, The World of Pope's Satires (London: Methuen, 1968), 27.

Chapter Two: Dramatic Portraiture and The Rape of the Lock

Though it serves well as an introduction to Pope's psychological interests, the Epistle to Cobham is of course a later work than several which bear directly on my topic. Pope's technique of portraiture, if not yet as developed as it is in the Epistle to a Lady, is nonetheless sure and almost independent of context in that poem. The Rape, however, cannot be approached in altogether the same manner, with quite the same expectations. The poem differs considerably from most of the others in this study particularly in its use of a consistent narrative to supply continuity, rather than following a discursive or polemical thematic line; the argument of the little epic is set out as a concrete series of events rather than as an abstract discussion which lights on unconnected examples for its illumination. If the Moral Essays are composed of a basic abstract discussion highlighted with illustrative sketches or portraits, the Rape resembles rather a continuous film with occasional abstract commentary spoken or formally implied; a continuous film, however, in which the narrative reveals a number of fixed states instead of developing from an initial situation to its outcome (the story of Lord Petre and Miss Fermor has to be completely insignificant or the entire point of the mock-epic would be lost). To press the cinematic metaphor, Pope sometimes effectively stops the film, freezing frames or sequences, with results

similar to those of the examples of the epistles; namely, the writing of intensely realized poetic portraits. These, and the psycho-social qualities they are used to debate, will be the chief concern of this chapter.

No worry need be caused by the fact that the characterization is at times spread about the narrative rather than concentrated into a single passage; no-one would be likely to deny Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen the title of portraitist for the sole reason of a predominantly narrative mode.

The example of Chaucer is particularly suitable, in that he uses carefully depicted characters to supply much of his narrative material, on which they provide an implicit commentary, perhaps to a greater extent than in any other poet but Robert Browning. Pope's technique is not Chaucer's, however; whereas the Canterbury pilgrims express, debate, or parody ideals in their various stories, and enact these ideals or travesties in their lives, Pope's characters to a great extent are actual aesthetic embodiments of the characteristics they are linked with in his argument. When Chaucer qualifies a view by having a questionable character endorse it - a character made questionable by qualities revealed in a realistic narrative - Pope rather relies on the details he incorporates into a single scene to construct a character or provide the context of an idea. In this respect Chaucer is the more truly polemical

writer, Pope the more pictorial; Chaucer's moral argument stands or falls on realistic grounds, Pope's on aesthetic and formal.

Ariel is the first character to be presented in detail. To what extent his first utterance can be treated as a dramatic monologue is debatable; the understanding one acquires in the course of his speech of the sort of being he is is largely derived from his description of his place in the Rosicrucian scheme of things to which he belongs: he seldom speaks of himself directly, nor do his words hint at the implied character as so often in Browning. Nonetheless Ariel portrays himself clearly enough as one of a kind in a picture central to the argument of the poem; let us therefore look at his "self-portrait":

Hear and believe! thy own Importance know,
 Nor bound thy narrow Views to Things below.
 Some secret Truths from Learned Pride conceal'd,
 To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd:
 What tho' no Credit doubting Wits may give?
 The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
 Know then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
 The light Militia of the lower Sky;
 These, tho' unseen, are ever on the Wing,
 Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring.
 Think what an Equipage thou hast in Air,
 And view with scorn Two Pages and a Chair.
 As now your own, our Beings were of old,

And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous Mold;
 Thence, by a soft Transition, we repair
 From earthly Vehicles to these of Air.

(I,35-50)

Ariel is a strange mixture of weighty nothings. Following his encouragement of hubristic self-importance in lines 35 and 36:

Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
 Nor bound thy narrow Views to Things below

he advances his demonstration of Belinda's consequence; the presence of a bodyguard "Militia" about her, the hordes of spirits making up this "Equipage". The true significance of these attendants is not as simple as Ariel implies, however. We are warned by Ariel's hierarchy of perception and by his imperatives:

What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?

The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.

(I,39-40)

Ariel sets faith, which is based on itself rather than on externals, above reason, the extrinsically based type of outlook; the imperatives which reveal more of Ariel's character than he intends are "Hear and believe!", and thereafter "Know then". The admonition to believe is preceded and immediately followed by flattery, and Ariel expects Belinda to accept it for that reason; the advice to "believe" is subsequently replaced by the confident command to "Know then", the "then" giving an inconsequent but useful air of logical consequence to what he is about

to say. It is only to a believer that one issues a command to know something unknowable with any chance of being obeyed; and essentially unknowable Ariel would seem to be. His forces are a "light" parody of the Hero's retinue, indicating insubstantiality in all their actions (whether "light" be an adjective or a noun epithet lvx): "ever on the Wing", they "Hang" and "Hover" without ever assuming any solid qualities. Their characteristic element is itself the least definite of the four, the air:

The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.

(I, 65-66)

These lines contrast interestingly with those previously quoted:

Thence, by a soft Transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to these of Air.

(I, 49-50)

Both the sylphs and their element are "of Air", as a comparison of the couplets brings out; Ariel and his regiment suffer from the same disjunction from reality or the outside world which so often indicates mental disorder in Pope: being "Air" in "Air" they are in effect capable of existing only in themselves, and their sole reference to the solid world lies in the nature of what corresponds to their substance and matrix. The "soft Transition" is scarcely a change at all.

This being so, the reader is forced to question, if not the actual sense, at least the intention and connotation of all that Ariel says. The preservation of the ego, for instance, can lead to unpleasant consequences. The Sylph may speak of continued enjoyments:

Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the Cards.
Her Joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And Love of Ombre, after Death survive.

(I, 53-56)

But the spirits of the coquettes are recognizably those hags who are the sad "Ghosts of Beauty" some twenty years later in the Epistle to a Lady:

Still round and round the Ghosts of Beauty glide,
And haunt the places where their Honour dy'd.

(241-242)

These are the spirits whose commitment to the world of vanity has allowed the "Love of Ombre" to survive into "an old Age of Cards" (Epistle to a Lady, 244) in endless repetition. Neither hags nor coquettes can accept the end of abused youth and attractiveness with a good grace. The hags have admittedly lost the "Honour" which is the source of the coquettes' power, but their relentless pursuit of intangible pleasure, driving them "round and round", closely parallels the sylphs' method of keeping their recruits pure:

Thro' all the giddy Circle they pursue,
And old Impertinence expel by new.

What tender Maid but must a Victim fall
 To one Man's Treat, but for another's Ball?
 When Florio speaks, what Virgin could withstand,
 If gentle Damon did not squeeze her Hand?

(I, 93-98)

Perpetual motion of the "giddy Circle" is called for to prevent any means from reaching an end; the sylphs' "end" is the self-perpetuating process itself. Although, as Cleanth Brooks puts it, "The sylphs are, as Ariel himself suggests, 'honour', though honour rendered concrete and as it actually functions, not honour as a dry abstraction",¹ this "honour" is nonetheless ultimately very similar to the "merry, miserable Night" of the fallen women in the Epistle to a Lady (240) in its form, one of a continued and self-perpetuating process as mechanical as the rhythm of the verse describing it. Self-perpetuation in this egotistic form denies progress or inheritance. The "giddy Circle" of Belinda's world and the circling of the hags are all ultimately effects of reassertion of the self, and though they occur physically in the beau monde, their true location is internal, in the diseased psyche: Atossa's "Eddy Brain" is the final type of this static motion.² The social world of The Rape of the Lock is an enactment of this egotism.

The circle is not the only characteristic symptom of the disease. Notice the symmetrical relation between the first and second of these couplets:

What tender Maid but must a Victim fall
To one Man's Treat,/but for another's Ball?
When Florio speaks,/what Virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?

(I, 95-98)

The only metrical variant in the four lines is the inverted "but for", which quickens its line only long enough to escape the seductive effect of the "Treat" by means of the "Ball". For the rest the two couplets mirror themselves in each other looking ahead not only to Belinda's dressing-table, but ultimately to the lifeless symmetry of Timon's garden. This aspect of the beau monde, the mechanical replacing the animate, is revealed in metaphor as well as rhythm :

With varying Vanities, from ev'ry Part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their Heart;
Where Wigs with Wigs, with Sword-knots Sword-knots
strive,
Beaus banish Beaus, and Coaches Coaches drive.

ionable society in a travesty of Pope's own favourite antithesis; and finally the virtual structural identity of the last two lines quoted. Throughout there is only reiteration where there should be development; the lines themselves could virtually be a piece of clockwork taken by a "soft Transition" from the "moving Toyshop of their Heart", running with the same meaningless self-imitating action as the toys.

This reiteration of sameness is of particular significance if set more firmly in the contemporary cultural context. Compare a line from Pope's Iliad:

Shields urg'd on Shields, and Men drove Men along.³

The relation between repeated objects is substantially different in Pope's serious epic: the emphasis is on contrary actions, on forces opposing each other in an attempt to prevail. Difference is an essential of such contest; but the repetitions in Augustan parody⁴ emphasize the lack of such difference, the essential denial of otherness which egotism entails. "The mock-epic reminds an unheroic age of its own nature" observes Warren.⁵

Throughout the poem an ambivalent relation of the beautiful to the real serves as a Leitmotiv for Ariel and his school. The blissful afterlife which Ariel promises his charge turns out to be solely occupied with the perpetuation of her order, as Ariel explains to his regiment of former beauties:

Our humbler Province is to tend the Fair,
 Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious Care.
 To save the Powder from too rude a Gale,
 Nor let th' imprison'd Essences exhale,
 To draw fresh Colours from the vernal Flow'rs,
 To steal from Rainbows ere they drop in Show'rs
 A brighter Wash; to curl their waving Hairs,
 Assist their Blushes, and inspire their Airs;
 Nay oft, in Dreams, Invention we bestow,
 To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelo.

(II, 91-100)

One cannot even make out a case for the sylphs as protectors of some mystical ideal of divinely authorized chastity. Although Ariel warns that one of the calamities of the day might be that "the Nymph shall break Diana's law" (II, 105), this would mean no more than the breaking of an ornament in the following line. The sylphs seek only to protect their own world, excluding the "too rude... Gale" which intrudes on their soap-bubble ideal, suppressing any attempt by the "waving Hairs" to resist their captivity or by the "imprison'd" perfumes to escape into the outside world. This world exists to be exploited rather than inhabited: rainbows are sources of make-up and no more, which indicates the limitations of the sylphs' ideal. As is implicit in the narrative, the assisting of blushes is merely the cosmetic vanity which Pope has already laughed at so mercilessly at the end of Canto I, and the concealed pun of "inspire their Airs" (inspirare = to breath air

into) again reinforces the impression that the sylphs are trying to turn Belinda into an incorporeal puppet in their own image and of their own airy substance.

Ariel is also unaware of a latent self-contradiction in his imagery. He speaks in terms of rococo landscape when dealing with make-up; in keeping with the sylphs' element, everything is light in tone, superficial, picturesque. The insubstantiality is, however, deceptive. The forces which in reality make hags out of too successful coquettes are hinted at in the imprisoning effect of the bubble reputation the sylphs guard. The coquette's powder is to be firmly fixed in place, hair and perfume contained. These are only hints and symptoms with Ariel; but with Belinda the latent malaise becomes explicit.

Like most of Pope's women, Belinda is from the beginning a creature of paradox. Even stranger than the Baron's rape is her own provocation of it by denying her womanhood:

Say what strange Motive, Goddess! cou'd compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
Oh say what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
Cou'd make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?

(I, 7-10)

Beneath the appearance of femininity lies aggression better suited to the epic than to the social-comic:

And in soft Bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?

(I, 12)

The reference to the celebrated opening passage of the *Aeneid* - "tantaene animis caelestibus irae?"⁶ - recalls the trouble which Juno's assumption of powers not suited to her proper sphere (goddess of marriage) causes as she tries to interfere with the necessary course of events.

Despite this portentous epic quality and her numinous beauty Belinda is still largely the airy nothing Ariel tries to encourage. Her most striking characteristics are all qualified or in some way undercut. Twice she is set up as a ridiculous hyperbolic rival to the sun:

Sol thro' white Curtains shot a tim'rous Ray,
And op'd those Eyes that must eclipse the Day;
(I, 13-14)

... the Rival of his Beams
(II, 3).

This quality in Belinda is not only self-evidently somewhat extreme; it is further undercut by the simile used a little later on:

Bright as the Sun, her Eyes the Gazers strike,
And, like the Sun, they shine on all alike.
(II, 13-14)

Belinda's "Smiles ... to all" mean very little. Winifred Nowottny observes that

[Line 14] seems to aim at an ultimate in banality. Not content with the explicit "all alike", Pope selects a banal simile ("Sun"

for favour) and has the sun do the least original thing possible (it doesn't beam, blaze or glow - it merely shines), and to complete the obviousness the last word of the line ("alike") chimes with the second ("like") and its dullness is emphasized by the force of the word with which it rhymes ("strike").⁷

But this of course is just what Belinda wants. The outside world is of importance to her only as a general field to hunt in; the only audience needing more distinction from the "banality" is herself. The first Canto closes with a biting description of Belinda's putting on her divinity in the rites of self-worship:

First, rob'd in White, the Nymph intent adores
 With Head uncover'd, the Cosmetic Pow'rs.
 A heav'nly Image in the Glass appears,
 To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears ;
 (I, 123-126).

Belinda is a virgin priestess of her own divinity; the act of bending is for her at once a subjection and an elevation when she prostrates herself only to call up her own reflection. Cleanth Brooks observes:

Belinda is a goddess, but she puts on her divinity at the dressing table; and, such is the paradox of beauty worship, she can be both the sincere devotee and the divinity herself.⁸

This form of self-worship is particularly oppressive; it is merely her superficial image as a beauty that Belinda kneels before, subjecting her whole being, including the attributes of the real woman, to her appearance as far as she is able. The artistry of making up serves only to reduce her to a puppet of the sylphs' ideal. The effects of this are made apparent in the oft-quoted alliterative list of confused articles on the dressing table. According to Mack the "Bible" is the "one inharmonious term",⁹ but for once one might disagree with him; it is the very harmony of the b- and p- sound which is the important feature. The reader is given a momentary coquette's view of the dressing table, and must thus be encouraged to find the Bible as part of the clutter with only a delayed sense of unfitness. This merging of identities and subduing of the discriminating powers is another manifestation of the stultifying effect of the ideal the sylphs protect. This technique of reader-entrapment will be seen again in The Dunciad.

When Betty "decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring Spoil"(I. 132), the goddess is both an image of the coquette to whom only self-perpetuation is important, and by implication a garlanded sacrifice to the self. The imprisonment which vanity entails becomes more apparent when it appears that other countries exist only to provide the articles needed for self-aggrandizement, and can be contained in a box of trinkets;

This Casket India's glowing Gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder Box.

(I, 133-134)

Other religions too exist only to provide further trappings for the ritual of self-worship; the reduction of the Bible to a trinket has already been noted.

In consequence of the combined beauty and unreality of her ideal, Belinda tries to inhabit a world closer to that of the sylphs than that of the real sun she rivals. Here she goes forth to be admired:

But now secure the painted Vessel glides,
The Sun-beams trembling on the floating Tydes,
While melting Musick steals upon the Sky,
And soften'd Sounds along the Waters die.
Smooth flow the Waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the World was gay.

(II, 47-52)

The intangibility and indefiniteness of the world whose centre Belinda supplies is remarkable. The Vessel is "secure" only in that it keeps a smooth course, not by virtue of any intrinsic solidity (in fact, in the light of the lines immediately preceding, where the Baron plans his rape, the "now" of line 47 implies an "only now, not in a little while"). Being a "painted Vessel", Belinda's boat shares her unreality: it is not far removed from Coleridge's "painted ship/Upon a painted ocean". Images of dissolution or suppression abound: "melting Musick",

"soften'd Sounds"; the music "steals", waves and wind operate "smoothly" and "gently"; line 48 in particular is extraordinarily insubstantial:

The Sun-beams trembling on the floating Tydes

Being reflected on the water, the intangible light is already at one remove from the viewer; "trembling", it is rendered less apprehensible by being reflected on an agitated surface; even the tides themselves, which support everything else and so might be expected to show some stability, are floating too.

In the midst of all this intangibility, however, Belinda still exists, however egotistically, in the real world of necessity. The self-worship of the "sacred Rites of Pride" (I, 128) is not sufficient to satisfy her; she still needs the worship of the "Earthly Lover" (III, 144) to pay her homage, even though she attempts to fend off this lover while attracting him:

On her white Breast a sparkling Cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.

(II, 7-8)

The cross at once proclaims Belinda as an object of adoration (itself made attractive to the worshippers of line 8 by its setting) and stops short the attempt to reach her.

Belinda's crucifix offers a talisman of chastity, but simultaneously calls attention to the décolletage it so strikingly sets off.¹⁰

As ever, it is the superficial image which is to be given the attention intended for the real woman; it is the crucifix, with its message of "No trespassers", which is offered for kisses, not the breast. Again, too, the forms of other religion are usurped for the purposes of self-worship. This distortion of other ideals, religious or erotic, has its dangers, however; not only the inevitable temporal outcome of the coquette's evasions, but also the rape they provoke. Though the world of mankind serves as a source of homage, as a hunting ground,¹¹ the result of such predation is ultimately a battle of the sexes, which despite Belinda's heroic arming scene is less of a classical militia amoris than a militia contra amorem. Amor, of the earthly world, exists in Belinda's eyes only as an opposite to her airiness.

This refers to Belinda's conscious self; she is unknowingly also a real woman. Ariel's command of her is not supreme:

'Twas then Belinda! if Report say true,
Thy Eyes first open'd on a Billet-doux;
Wounds, Charms, and Ardours, were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.

(I, 117-120)

The vigour of the "Wounds, Charms and Ardours" is sufficient to banish the sterile stasis of the dream Belinda is initially reluctant to wake from (see I, 19-20); and thus she is susceptible to what are by sylph standards weaknesses of

the flesh; Ariel's protection is abruptly nullified when "Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her Art,/An Earthly Lover lurking at her Heart." (III, 143-144) To Belinda the presence of such a lover hardly matters, since her ideal is satisfied with the preservation of inviolate appearances; after the rape she exclaims in distress that the loss of her coquette's "honour" is so obvious:

Oh hadst thou, Cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any Hairs but these!

(IV, 175-176)

If the "Hairs less in sight" exist at all on the rarified bodies of the sylphs, they are presumably protected as avidly as any other; Belinda has enough of the woman in her not to be destroyed at the thought of the ruffling of pubic hair. Her distress is rather that of Timon when half the perfect self-contemplating symmetry of his garden is destroyed.

In much the same manner of the Epistle to Cobham, The Rape of the Lock makes virtues out of weaknesses. It is Belinda's very superficiality that allows the real woman in her to emerge when that superficiality is disrupted. Price notes that "Pope uses the mock order of false art as a symbol of moral failure"¹² and quotes lines from An Essay on Criticism referring to the art of superficial perfection which hides fundamental flaws. This is true of Belinda's cosmetics and her social poise; but it is by the very failure of the sylph moral, the fact that these things are not

and cannot be the real woman, that the effect of a benign humorous rape - the action of the poem - can be to reveal the underlying absurdity of the coquette's self-importance, and thus give Belinda an alternative to the hag's old age. The sylph ideal must have its weak points, as the continued existence of the human race bears witness.

While we are looking at Belinda, it is worth noting the characteristic language she uses, which supplies a useful index to her frame of mind by dramatizing it in her utterance. On three of the four occasions on which she speaks in the poem she utters imperatives:

Let Spades be Trumps! she said, and Trumps they were.
(III, 46)

Now meet thy Fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd ...
(V, 87)

Restore the Lock! she cries ;
(V, 103).

Not only are three quarters of her utterances imperatives, but each is a similar tetrasyllabic beginning to a line in regular iambics; by and large the speaker sees the world as a subordinate realm awaiting a formulaic oracular dispensation. Her other speech, however, indicates something of the price to be paid for setting oneself outside the normal course of events; Belinda manifests the symptoms of the prude whose withdrawal from the world of pleasures wryly comments on the coquette's own withdrawal:

For ever curs'd be this detested Day,
 Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite Curl away!
 Happy! ah ten times happy, had I been,
 If Hampton-Court these Eyes had never seen!
 Yet am not I the first mistaken Maid,
 By Love of Courts to num'rous Ills betray'd.
 Oh had I rather Un-admir'd remain'd
 In some lone Isle, or distant Northern Land;
 Where the gilt Chariot never marks the Way,
 Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
 There kept my Charms conceal'd from mortal Eye,
 Like Roses that in Desarts bloom and die.
 What mov'd my Mind with youthful Lords to rome?
 O had I stay'd, and said my Pray'rs at home!

(IV, 147-160)

A comic Macbeth, Belinda begins to "grow a-weary of the Sun" as a result of her self-importance. She rejects all the joys of the fashionable world, since living in that world has destroyed her superficial self-sufficiency. All the good she now wishes for is negative - "had this not been" - and in lines 159 to 160 she has become an accomplished prude.¹³ Although she tries to reclaim her lock, the attempt has to fail, and it seems clear that she will no longer be in any position to play the coquette; Belinda will have to learn to be a real woman and like it. The coquette ideal cannot exist in the real world; it belongs to the realm of madness, fantasy and Queen Mab:

Some thought it mounted to the Lunar Sphere,

Since all things lost on Earth, are treasur'd there.
 There Heroes' Wits are kept in pondrous Vases,
 And Beaus' in Snuff-boxes and Tweezer-Cases.
 There broken Vows, and Death-bed Alms are found,
 And Lovers' Hearts with Ends of Riband bound;
 The Courtier's Promises, and Sick Man's Pray'rs,
 The Smiles of Harlots, and the Tears of Heirs,
 Cages for Gnats, and Chains to Yoak a Flea;
 Dry'd Butterflies, and Tomes of Casuistry.

(V, 113-122)

In this Never-Never Land of impossibilities, self-contradictions, fashionable fripperies, and further imprisonments and paradoxes, the virginal Lock of a coquette should be in its true element. If at our most generous we accept Pope's apotheosis of the lock as being more than a compliment to Arabella Fermor, the thing can nonetheless exist only by abstraction from the demands of earthly life into the sidereal and aesthetic:

This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to Fame,
 And mid'st the Stars inscribe Belinda's Name!

(V, 149-150)

Belinda is the most fully realised and most psychologically interesting of the human characters in the poem; but at least two other actors in the drama are presented in sufficient detail to be regarded as further examples of Pope's ability to embody an argument in verbal portrait. The first of these, the Baron, although not of any party

represented in the Rosicrucian machinery, is thematically as much as narratively or dramatically Belinda's antagonist. While her ideal is one of essential introversion, the Baron worships love as something external to be reached towards, and is bent on making a conquest of something he wants to keep once he has it:

For this, ere Phoebus rose, he had implor'd
 Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry Pow'r ador'd,
 But chiefly Love - to Love an Altar built,
 Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
 There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves;
 And all the Trophies of his former Loves.

(II, 35-40)

The description is ridiculous, of course, but the Baron's extremism is a necessary counter-force to Belinda's. Consider the couplet

There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves;
 And all the Trophies of his former Loves.

The man has certainly surrounded himself with clutter; but it is a clutter signifying that he is at least alive. The unmatched glove, specifically half of a pair, externalizes his interests strongly, as may the odd number of garters. Although the Baron is a parodic ideal of love to be set against coquettish vanity, he takes on a roughly equivalent significance to Belinda. Warren speaks of the "altars to Pride and Love, their real religions";¹⁴ and

a type of urge to union is implied in the incomplete halves which make up the Baron's trophy collection. The image can be traced back to Plato's Symposium at least, and is implied in the branches of Sabinus' garden.¹⁵ Belinda, one should note, is set on keeping both matching halves of her locks firmly on her own head. Both the Baron and Belinda are, however, ruled by a passion of self-gratification, and ultimately the most one can say for the Baron is that his attitude comes out slightly on the more practical side. The clutter of his altar is a more vital sign than Belinda's lame hexametrical collection of "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux". Notice by way of comparison how line 40 of the last couplet in my quotation speeds up with its lack of punctuation after the even balance of line 39. Each peculiar conquest in line 39 is allowed a hint of its own nature; no Bibles vanish in alliteration. This greater vitality of the Baron's party, or his side in the battle of the sexes, is brought at one point into direct conflict with the sylphs' ideal, when the love letter dispels the chaste vision:

Wounds, Charms, and Ardors, were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.

(I, 119-120)

This couplet's metrical value is the same as that of the one I quoted detailing his trophies. In the first line of each there is a similar slow spondee followed by one and a half iambic feet before the caesura to a more regular and smoother flow thereafter; while the second line of each couplet

carries one along in an expansive uninterrupted iambic flow:

There lay three Garters, half a Pair of Gloves,
And all the Trophies of his former Loves.

Wounds, Charms, and Ardors, were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.

The love letter allows a fatal opening for the erotic to introduce itself, and thus the woman in Belinda is sympathetically attracted into the world of externals and earthly lovers, Ariel notwithstanding.

The Baron's own mode of speech is as worth considering as Belinda's. He is thrice allowed to speak in the poem; firstly when rejoicing at his successful assault:

Let Wreaths of Triumph now my Temples twine,
(The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is mine!
While Fish in Streams, or Birds delight in Air,
Or in a Coach and Six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,
Or the small Pillow grace a Lady's Bed,
While Visits shall be paid on solemn Days,
While numerous Wax-lights in bright Order blaze,
While Nymphs take Treats, or Assignations give,
So long my Honour, Name, and Praise shall live!

(III, 161-170)

This speech is composed almost wholly of temporals. In a manner resembling the composition of his pyre, the Baron

fills his speech with features of daily life, which Belinda invokes only to regret: what is to her by the end of the forth canto only the world in which she has fallen, is to the Baron a collection of external reference points by which he can assess and externalize his achievement.

The Baron's second speech, in which he announces his intention of keeping his prize, displays a similar but more complex involvement in the world:

But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,
 (Which never more shall join its parted Hair,
 Which never more its Honours shall renew,
 Clipt from the lovely Head where late it grew)
 That while my Nostrils draw the vital Air,
 This Hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.

(IV, 133-138)

Again the Baron maintains that his victory will last as long as something else does - his breathing in this case - but on a less conscious level too he shows himself a creature very much aware of the real world; he seems to tie everything he mentions to some further defining object. In an extraordinary repetitive syntax he first describes the lock - "this Lock, this sacred Lock" - rather as if simply to call it "this sacred Lock" would be impossible; he first thinks of the lock, and then of its characteristic sacredness; he then relates it to its origin and recent violation - "Which never more shall join its parted Hair" - relates that in another subordinate relative clause to the change he

has effected in Belinda's life - "Which never more its Honours shall renew" - and then returns to the lock with the word "Clipt", referring to the first "Which" and thence to the "Lock" itself, which takes him back to his recent feat - "from the lovely Head where late it grew" - before he gets on with whatever it is that he is swearing (unspecified since line 133). The Baron is unable to see anything in isolation; a power of associative consciousness forces him to harmonize every subordinate clause with another in a kind of verbal stretto fugue when describing his accomplishment. (I use the musical image deliberately to emphasize the continuation of each clause's syntax in the development of the others, as strettis consist at once of their individual melodies, and of harmonies with each other.) Notice that even after the parenthesis his seemingly simple concluding couplet includes the temporal referent I mentioned earlier - "while my Nostrils draw the vital Air" - and at the word "Hand" manages to slip in yet another qualifying relative - "This Hand, which won it...." And in his final speech the Baron appropriately reminds Belinda that she is herself a vulnerable human, and achieves as much self-transcendence as a comic poem can allow:

Nor think, to die dejects my lofty Mind;

All that I dread, is leaving you behind!

(V, 99-100)

The world is valuable to the Baron, if we are to accept his grandiloquent claim, by virtue of its containing something to aspire to, rather than to subject. His desire to "die"

(see line 78 of the same canto) is a telling pun; for the coquette self-continuation and chastity oppose both senses of the word for the same reason.

It would be an imposition on the satire, however, to treat the Baron as the hero or moral standard of the drama. He supplies a dramatic antithesis to Belinda's ideal (as the sylphs' pupil) of a self-perpetuating status quo, and so helps by contrast to indicate her deficiencies; but his own role in the satire casts him partially as one of Pope's victims himself. The Baron's objectives, considered in themselves, are trivial, even open to the accusation of confusing surface and symbol. His trophies are of metonymic importance as symbols of his alignment with the forces of love and sex which Belinda opposes; but at the same time the articles used for these trophies - "French Romances", "Garters", "Gloves", and "Billet-doux" - are souvenirs of conventional victories in the battle of the sexes rather than emblems of any profound love; they are intended to be gloated, not sighed over. The Baron's loves are themselves closely implicated in the beau monde, and are indicated by the trappings of that world. Despite erotic innuendo, the Baron directs his efforts to gaining the public symbol of Belinda's chastity, the lock, rather than the "Hairs less in sight". The other trophies, sacrificed to the purpose of gaining the lock, likewise are part of the set of counters used in playing the social game. The sacrifice serves further to undercut his character if one notices its resemblance to the sacrifice of Theobald a little over a decade later, in

another mock-epic; Theobald, or Cibber, also constructs his religion from misunderstood objects, plundering the intellectual rather than the erotic world:

Of these twelve volumes, twelve of amplest size,
 Redeem'd from tapers and defrauded pyes,
 Inspir'd he seizes: These an altar raise:
 An hecatomb of pure, unsully'd lays
 That altar crowns ...

(The Dunciad Variorum, I, 135-139).

The books in the study of the arch-dunce and the Baron's library alike belong in the "Lunar Sphere"; rather than being a force of wronged nature, the Baron is the antithetic counterforce to Belinda, and in his old age he is likely to undergo a transformation into something like the "rev'rend sire" of the Epistle to Cobham as surely as the coquette will be changed into prude or hag. The Ruling Passion of self-aggrandisement in each case is a destructive force; even if it lends its supporter the ironic identity of divinity or virility, it is at this stage unreconcilable for Pope with the claims of the outside world, and the sense to obey them.

The character embodying the common sense and moderation so lacking in both the Baron and Belinda is Clarissa, "a new Character introduced ... to open more clearly the MORAL of the Poem", to quote Pope's own note. Let us look at her presentation:

Say, why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
 The wise Man's Passion, and the vain Man's Toast?
 Why deck'd with all that Land and Sea afford,

Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd?
 Why round our Coaches crowd the white-glov'd Beaus,
 Why bows the Side-box from its inmost Rows?
 How vain are all these Glories, all our Pains,
 Unless good Sense preserve what Beauty gains:
 That Men may say, when we the Front-box grace,
 Behold the first in Virtue, as in Face!
 Oh! if to dance all Night, and dress all Day,
 Charm'd the Small-pox, or chas'd old Age away;
 Who would not scorn what Huswife's Cares produce,
 Or who would learn one earthly Thing of Use?
 To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint,
 Nor could it sure be such a Sin to paint.
 But since, alas! frail Beauty must decay,
 Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey,
 Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
 And she who scorns a Man, must die a Maid;
 What then remains, but well our Pow'r to use,
 And keep good Humour still whate'er we lose?
 And trust me, Dear! good Humour can prevail,
 When Airs, and Flights, and Screams, and Scolding fail.
 Beauties in vain their pretty Eyes may roll,
 Charms strike the Sight, but Merit wins the Soul.

(V, 9-34)

The avowed purpose of this speech is "to open more clearly the MORAL", and it does so with such thoroughness that the critic is largely defied; there is little actually calling for clarification. Clarissa's opinions are sensible throughout, with emphasis being placed on this quality by the use of various rhetorical devices,

such as the setting up of untenable hypotheses, which stresses the importance of concerns ignored by the beau monde ("Oh, if to dance all Night, and dress all Day,/Charm'd the Small-pox ..."); or the memento mori and emphatic statement of plain fact in simple terms, making an impact by contrast with the disregard of these facts pervading Belinda's world:

But since, alas! frail Beauty must decay,
 Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to grey,
 Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
 And she who scorns a Man, must die a Maid;

(25-28).

These lines are not poetically lacking in texture; Empson intricately analyses the subtle internal modifications of tone and sense to reveal a great deal of sensitivity to subject-matter in Clarissa's speech;¹⁶ but all tends to the same overall message of common sense.

The main question this raises is what kind of character advocates common sense in the absurd setting of the poem. The answer, I should suggest, is primarily a character serving as an organ for the expression of the "correct" Augustan viewpoint. Unlike most of the Homeric parody of The Rape of the Lock, Clarissa's adaptation of Sarpedon's speech is distorted not to indicate failure to meet heroic standards, but rather to suggest other forms of them. The beau monde is not the world of Pope's Homer, and one of the qualities it lacks is an unquestioned moral hierarchy. Sarpedon may maintain that the man must justify his place, that it is necessary that

... great Acts superior Merit prove,
 And Vindicate the bounteous Pow'rs above ...¹⁷,

but in the world Clarissa inhabits it is impossible to express such a view; the powers which influence human affairs - the Rosicrucian elementals - have a dubious claim to any respect. What can be done is to remind one's hearers of the practicalities of existence; "superior Merit", which must be asserted for heroic honour, becomes "Beauty", which it is as well to make the most of; and "great Acts" are replaced by the necessary ones which "good Sense" dictates. Clarissa is important as a speaker because she expresses the truths which the other characters ignore. Her weakness as a character in her own right, however, should not be overlooked; her speech is a lesson, and the character it implies is that of a teacher rather than a human example of the "good Humour" she advocates. The word "Humour" calls for a circumspect approach on the reader's part; it is at once the Augustan term for an inclination to the cheerful or the gloomy, and the modern one for a type of comical effect aimed at revelation. Both types are implied in Addison's genealogy of "True Humour" and "False Humour":

FALSEHOOD.

NONSENSE.

FRENZY. - LAUGHTER.

FALSE HUMOUR.

TRUTH.

GOOD SENSE.

WIT. - MIRTH.

HUMOUR.¹⁸

Clarissa's aims and intentions are clearly of the second type; perhaps, in fact, it is because she warns Belinda only of the danger of dying "a Maid" rather than invoking the image of the Hags which coquettes become that she undercuts the sense of her warning, allowing an excess of "good Humour" to thwart its own ends. A slightly more satiric tone, as opposed to humorous, might be more successful; the further option, that of writing a favourable character-sketch which will embody its moral in the verse's representation of psychological traits, would not fall within the scope of Pope's art for twenty more years.

It would, however, be pedantry to call this weakness more than a trifling flaw in the poem's structure, be that as a satire or as the vehicle for erotic study; and as Johnson happily puts it, "what are such faults to so much excellence!"¹⁹

Notes

¹ C. Brooks, "The Case of Miss Arabella Fermor" in The Well Wrought Urn (London: Dobson, 1949), 83.

² Notice also Atossa's ultimate childlessness, a fate implied for the successful coquette as well.

³ Pope's Iliad IV, 485; see also IV, 508-509.

⁴ A further example may be found in Gay's The Mohocks in Plays of John Gay (London: Cahill and Company, 1978), I, p.7, where "watchman rolls/On watchman", the watchmen ironically being not opponents, but similarly inept representatives of law and order, sharing a joint fate.

⁵ A. Warren, Rage for Order (np, University of Michigan Press, 1959), 46.

⁶ Vergil, Aeneid I, 11 in Corpus Poetarum Latinorum, ed. G. Weber (Frankfurt: Henrici Ludovici Broenneri [sic], 1833).

⁷ W. Nowotny, The Language Poets Use (London: Athlone Press, 1962), 8-9.

⁸ C. Brooks, op. cit., 77.

⁹ M. Mack, "'Wit and Poetry and Pope': Some Observations on his Imagery" in op. cit., 31.

¹⁰ P. H. Knox-Shaw, "Blemishing Lucrece: the Disclosure of Motive in The Rape of the Lock" in University of Cape Town Studies in English Issue 9 (September 1979), 48.

¹¹ See too lines 25 to 28 of Canto II.

¹² M. Price, To the Palace of Wisdom (London: Arcturus, 1964), 156.

¹³ An easy conversion; the two readily unite in one character. In his Apology for his Life (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1914), 88, Cibber speaks of a dramatic "coquette-prude who prides herself in being chaste and cruel at fifty". Here the "soft Transition" from potential to virtually identical impotence (earthly to ethereal body) is less euphemistically but otherwise similarly effected by mere ageing.

¹⁴ A. Warren, op. cit., 47. See also T. Bloch, "Pope's Mock-epic Altars" in Notes and Queries (New Series), 18, No. 9 (September 1971), 331. Bloch relates the altar to the one in 1 Kings xviii. 31-32 to make the religious aspect all the clearer.

¹⁵ See Epistle to Burlington, 92.

¹⁶ W. Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 72-73.

¹⁷ The Episode of Sarpedon, 35-36.

¹⁸ J. Addison in The Spectator, 10 April 1711, p. 130.

¹⁹ S. Johnson, op. cit., 317.

Chapter Three: Portraits of Dives

The means Pope uses in drawing his characters may so far be roughly divided into two categories: the chronicling method he employs with Wharton in the Epistle to Cobham, in which method a portrait is drawn chiefly from the relation of a man's history, with significant parts selected from the whole to illustrate the moral or psychological point being made; and the more immediate and dramatic method employed later in the same epistle and throughout The Rape of the Lock, in which the same process occurs in an importantly altered form. Belinda is a subject to be judged less from the course of a life history, illustrated by selected events, than from the description of participation in these events. The dangers of the historical approach to character¹ can to some extent be avoided when there are no omissions in the passages portraying a character. With Wharton's story we are aware of the distance between us and the object of our attention, and incidents specifically alluded to - Wharton's defence of Atterbury or his Catholic period, for instance - are never descriptively evoked; whereas we are present as spectators at Belinda's toilet and can apprehend the scene in its entirety. In the latter case similar aesthetic interests and intentions underlie the portraiture, but Pope employs a more symptomatic form of diagnosis and illustration. The subject of study is minutely described in terms of physical character-

istics, and the psychic centre must be understood from these. This technique varies from the historical chiefly in scale and in the symptoms worked with - on the one hand immediate physical circumstances, on the other historical events. The former means, that of drawing the man from his possessions, is appropriately given its most thorough use in the two epistles on riches addressed to Allen, Lord Bathurst and to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington. I shall now look at portions of these two poems.

Poems so explicitly concerned with the subject of wealth may seem out of place in a discussion of Pope's psychological studies; the action of spending money is of more significance to society than to the psyche, one might argue. It is true that the Burlington epistle is about wealth and its effects; but it is also true that ~~the aspect of wealth it most closely concerns itself with~~ is the type of human spirit it requires or creates. "Taste" and "Sense" are even more important concepts in this poem than elsewhere; they are also qualities indicative of both the type of individual who possesses or lacks them; and of the society which fosters or discourages them. In this ambivalent common ground between the self and its world consists a potential for assessing each in terms of values not quite its own, and yet all-important for its continuation. Man and his society must both make concessions to each other's requirements.² This idea, most expressly worked out in the two poems under discussion, is of import-

ance in correctly evaluating the potential of Pope's corrective satire, which we shall be able to attempt in the next chapter, and will be central to the psychological resolutions of Epistle to a Lady.

A simple comparison of two sections from superficially different poems will serve to show how the social context in one case has a significance closely related to the psychological or cosmic in other poems. In the Epistle to Cobham Wharton's changes of policy frustrate each other throughout:

Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,
And most contemptible, to shun contempt;
His Passion still, to covet gen'ral praise,
His Life, to forfeit it a thousand ways;

(194-197).

In exposing Wharton's weakness, this opens the way for exposing universal human traits. Now for Wharton's lust of praise substitute the desire for a beautiful garden, and replace the warring halves of Wharton's character with Sabinus and his son:

Thro' his young Woods how pleas'd Sabinus stray'd,
Or sat delighted in the thick'ning shade
With annual joy the red'ning shoots to greet,
Or see the stretching branches long to meet!
His Son's fine Taste an op'ner Vista loves,
Foe to the Dryads of his Father's groves,

One boundless Green, or flourish'd Carpet views,
 With all the mournful family of Yews;
 The thriving plants ignoble broomsticks made,
 Now sweep those Alleys they were born to shade.

(Epistle to Burlington, 89-98)

The theme of internal discord caused by the lack of stable and viable external criteria, or the lack of "Sense" to follow them,³ has been translated here from psychological to social terms; in place of Wharton's self-frustration we have in effect Shakespeare's Son that has killed his Father, put through a Swiftian filter. Wharton perverts the use of his talents to mere showmanship; likewise the natural processes in Sabinus' garden are first stressed as natural organic developments by their "annual" quality and seasonal colour change, by Sabinus' own enjoyment of the growth process, indicated in the charming personification of line 92, and by the hinted sense of a vital continuity which is supplied by the two present participles:

With annual joy the red'ning shoots to greet,
 Or see the straining branches long to meet!

This natural vitality is then destroyed when the son's extremism replaces the balanced garden with either a desolation "large and naked as a field" or a fussy "Carpet ... divided into too many parts, with scroll'd works and beds", to quote Pope's notes; in the case of either parterre "Nature" is "forgot"⁴ and aesthetic and filial disorder takes over, with the functions of the trees inverted in

echo of the problems of Sabinus's succession, which have left him with Atossa in Epistle to a Lady "Childless with all [his] Children" (148).

Pope is a poet of human manners and of human nature, and it is important that a study of his work recognize the interconnectedness of the two. The forces of "Nature", human or topographical, supply a type of practical or aesthetic norm from which human manners and arts deviate at times into frustration or destruction. These deviations are in part the solution Pope finds to the problems of psychological inquiry in the Epistle to Cobham, supplying a fairly solid body of evidence to judge human character from. Thus the manner and arts of a man or a society form an index to the character or nature of that man or society, and the artificial and superficial is studied as a means of access to the natural and essential. As Bowles put it:

No-one can stand pre-eminent as a great Poet unless he has not only a heart susceptible of the most pathetic or most exalted feelings of Nature, but an eye attentive to and familiar with every appearance she may exhibit.... With weak eyes and tottering strength, it is physically impossible Pope ... could be a descriptive Bard.... But how different, how minute his descriptions when he describes what he is master of: for instance, the game of Ombre....⁵

A nature poet, then, dealing with a different aspect of nature, creating "the drama of man's refusal to accept his nature",⁶ must be understood behind even the triumph of unnature represented by Timon's villa. As the man must be inferred from the oaths in Sir Plume's case, so the character of Timon and his qualities of mind must be divined from their manifestations in false art. The taste guilty of Timon's villa is another form of the quality which was at about the same time being identified as the Ruling Passion in An Essay on Man; and the solidity of the villa supplies an invaluable stationary manifestation of Timon's nature for Pope to paint his portrait from; the stream of life will not stay to be observed, but marble will:

At Timon's Villa let us pass a day,
Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'
So proud, so grand, of that stupendous air,
Soft and Agreeable come never there.
Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
As brings all Brobdignag before your thought.
To compass this, his building is a Town,
His pond an Ocean, his parterre a Down:
Who but must laugh, the Master when he sees,
A puny insect, shiv'ring at a breeze!
Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
The whole, a labour'd Quarry above ground.
Two Cupids squirt before: a Lake behind
Improves the keenness of the Northern wind.

His Gardens next your admiration call,
 On ev'ry side you look, behold the Wall!
 No pleasing Intricacies intervene,
 No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
 Grove nods at grove, each Alley has a brother,
 And half the platform just reflects the other.
 The suff'ring eye inverted Nature sees,
 Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as trees,
 With here a Fountain, never to be play'd,
 And there a Summer-house, that knows no shade;
 Here Amphitrite sails thro' myrtle bow'rs;
 There Gladiators fight, or die, in flow'rs;
 Un-water'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
 And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty Urn.

My Lord advances with majestic mien,
 Smit with the mighty pleasure, to be seen:
 But soft - by regular approach - not yet -
 First thro' the length of yon hot Terrace sweat,
 And when up ten steep slopes you've dragg'd your thighs
 Just at his Study-door he'll bless your eyes.

His Study! with what Authors is it stor'd?
 In Books, not Authors, curious is my Lord;
 To all their dated Backs he turns you round,
 These Aldus printed, those Du Suëil has bound.
 Lo some are Vellom, and the rest as good
 For all his Lordship knows, but they are Wood.
 For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
 These shelves admit not any modern book.

And now the Chapel's silver bell you hear,
 That summons you to all the Pride of Pray'r:
 Light quirks of Musick, broken and uneven,
 Make the soul dance upon a Jig to Heaven.
 On painted Cielings you devoutly stare,
 Where sprawl the Saints of Verrio or Laguerre,
 On gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
 And bring all Paradise before your eye.
 To rest, the Cushion and soft Dean invite,
 Who never mentions Hell to ears polite.

But hark! the chiming Clocks to dinner call;
 A hundred footsteps scrape the marble Hall:
 The rich Buffet well-colour'd Serpents grace,
 And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
 Is this a dinner? this a Genial room?
 No, 'tis a Temple, and a Hecatomb.
 A solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state,
 You drink by measure, and by minutes eat.
 So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
 Sancho's dread Doctor and his Wand were there.
 Between each Act the trembling salvers ring,
 From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King.
 In plenty starving, tantaliz'd in state,
 And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,
 Treated, caress'd, and tir'd, I take my leave,
 Sick of his civil Pride from Morn to Eve;
 I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
 And swear no Day was ever pass'd so ill.

This is a portrait of Timon, I maintain, but Timon himself is hardly ever located in the verse's tour of his house; his presence is hinted at in line 107:

Who but must laugh, the Master when he sees,
A puny insect, shiv'ring at a breeze!

And in line 127 he actually appears:

My Lord advances with majestic mien,
Smit with the mighty pleasure, to be seen:...

For the rest of the poem, however, there are only occasional direct references to Timon, never involving him in any explicit narrative role. Even the two sightings of Timon, furthermore, treat him as another object in his surroundings. In both cases he is on display, held up for contemplation:

... the Master when he sees ... (107)
the mighty pleasure, to be seen: (128).

Grammatically Timon is occasionally a true subject, when he "advances" in line 127, or when "he'll bless your eyes" in line 132; but he advances only "to be seen", and confers the blessing as passively by being looked at; for the rest he is passively attached to his verbs: as an object of "sees" in line 107; as the noun portion of the passive participle "Smit" in line 128, or of the passive infinitive "to be seen" in the same line. A man shows himself; an object is "to be seen". Timon gets no boost of vitality from the active participle "shiv'ring", since the sense is

entirely one of being acted on rather than acting.

Timon, then, is as much a thing as a person; but as the cynosure of the tour of a villa identified throughout as "Timon's", he informs the whole visit as a kind of anthropomorphic spirit of bad taste, pride personified; and in this character he in effect turns the tour itself into a species of character study. The reader is constantly reminded that the house and gardens are an externalization of character, a form of self-caricature of Timon: we are told of "his building", "His pond", and "his parterre", "His Gardens", "his Study-door"; every extravagance or vagary of taste is directly or indirectly referred to Timon. He exists, as we come to understand him during our tour of his villa, as the genivs loci, the informing spirit of the place, much as his home, compounded as it is of what Pope considers faults of taste, is less of an individual villa than a composite essence both of a school of building and of the minds of its perpetrators.

As is usual in Pope's visions of human folly or vice, the Timon figure is heavily paradoxical. He lives in a self-defeating style of grandeur:

So proud, so grand, ôf that stupendous air,
Soft and Agreeable come never there.

(101-102)

Line 101 contains in its form a summary of the overall effect of Timon's villa; beginning with the short descriptions

"So proud, so grand" which are relatively controlled and distinct by virtue of their disyllabic nature, the pauses of the commas, and the repeated form, the line then loses all dignity with its concluding "of that stupendous air" which, while not quite rushing one, still has a certain weighty impetus in its three uninterrupted iambic feet; the force not of vitality so much as of reaching a critical mass at which the process is no longer under control; the words "stupor" and "stupid" resonate within "stupendous": Timon is overcome by the scale of his surroundings, and the contempt for expense expressed in "'What sums are thrown away!'" has the effect of waste as well, since the effect is to render the place virtually uninhabitable. "Soft and Agreeable" have been driven out. "Timon's coarse numerical bid for grandeur is excruciating".⁸ Not only excruciating, but simultaneously and in the same way ~~anti-art and anti-nature~~; the sense to regulate one's own nature, and to create the order of true art, is offended by the disregard for the world of things seen as possessions rather than as an environment.

I have already mentioned that Timon is presented as an object among objects; in addition to this, he is not even a very important one, partially because Pope is laughing at him, partially because the contrast between owner and possessions offers such a ready supply of ridiculous material:

Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught,
As brings all Brobdignag before your thought.

(103-104)

The implication is that Timon's achievement has had the effect of showing up his diminutive and (continuing the parallel with Swift's non-heroic Gulliver of Book II) contemptible nature; he is only "A puny insect, shiv'ring at a breeze". Pope's satiric attack on Timon's pride is, however, more complex than merely turning him into a despicable Lilliputian; his buildings, as I have said, reflect his own nature, and so he is allowed to make himself, like "great Atossa", immensely large, to reveal how much he lacks any qualities other than pride in self. As Pat Rogers observes, his villa's "size is the measure of its owner's littleness - a truly Augustan inversion of scale."⁹ Timon's character as a rich man is reflected in its symptomatic setting:

Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
The whole, a labour'd Quarry above ground.

(109-110)

Nothing has been accomplished by the building except the rendering "huge" of Timon's insignificance, with no growth or essential transformation during the change. One might be tempted to employ the technique of the psychological critic and equate the magnification of Timon's "littleness" with the manifestation of the hidden involved in digging up the "Quarry" of the id, only to transport it unchanged into the world of events.

Incongruity pervades the whole description of Timon's villa; the functions of architecture, landscaping, and interior decoration, of music, painting, and literature, are constantly frustrated by the presence of their opposite qualities. Timon in many ways looks forward to Wharton and Atossa, in essence if not in form; instead of containing the qualities of the "Soft and Agreeable", "pleasing Intricacies", or "artful wildness", his garden is in turn overheated, swept by cold winds, oppressively enclosed, and a constant offence against taste and comfort alike. The symmetrical and mechanical layout of the garden in particular is appalling. In line 111 as soon as the Cupids and their fountain have been mentioned the line is abruptly stopped by a colon - "Two Cupids squirt before:" - and a lake is put behind the house to balance the line or the grounds with water on either side (and, to pursue the kitsch mentality, as a result of their ambivalent squirt). "A lake behind" reads strangely at first; what it is there for is unspecified, and while checked by the end of the line the reader has no grammatical referent for the thing; it appears for a moment - a moment which leaves a lingering impression, soon to be reinforced - to be there only to produce an effect of the very maximum of symmetry. Even after the missing grammatical specification has been supplied in the next line (it "Improves the keenness of the Northern wind"), we are not told why it has been put in such an inappropriate place; it cannot be intended for the purpose of chilling the house and grounds, despite the ironic implications. The lake's real value as a subject, which

line 111 implies it should have, remains obscure, perhaps non-existent, and the reader is left with the impression that it is where it is only because of its hinted connections with the Cupids. Between them these two aquatic features represent the chief failings of the grounds; the lake's "keenness" opposes the "Soft", and the incongruity of the Cupids as fountain ornaments, especially taken with the slightly obscene amplification of this anomaly suggested by the word "squirt", is set against the "Agreeable".

The verse makes it plain throughout the garden how each intended ornament serves only as a further hinderance to the "Agreeable" it is intended to promote. In line 117 "Grove nods at grove" with an automatic balanced symmetry as irritating as the deliberately obvious rhyme Pope choose to close the couplet:

...each Alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.

(117-118)

The "other" is inevitable; one awaits it in the very way Pope describes in An Essay on Criticism:

Where-e'er you find the cooling Western Breeze,
In the next Line, it whispers thro' the Trees;

(350-351).

Preconditioned, the reader awaits the balancing rhyme of "other" with the same hopeless expectation as the tourist

in Timon's garden.

Not content with denying garden features their potential decorative value, Timon pursues the same course to destroy the very identity of objects:

The suff'ring eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to Statues, Statues thick as trees,
(119-120).

The dead symmetry is still hinted at - "inverted Nature" suggests a reflection, while line 120 could hardly be more of a mechanically inverted duplication - but in addition the distinctions between objects are broken down: trees have been forced into alien forms and sculpture has become noticable rather for number than for individual form. The relation between trees and statues implied by line 120 suggests some logical expression of vague similarity between terms - noun dot noun. Other garden ornaments lose their essential character as well; although Cupids can be used as misplaced fountain ornaments, where water is needed we have "a Fountain, never to be play'd" (121) and "Un-water'd ... the drooping sea horse" (125), and even a ship in line 123 sailing through the vegetation; while gladiators tastelessly positioned in the flower bed evoke an unsuitable reaction to flowers and to statues, and the shadeless summer-house is useless as a result of the disregard for nature that unplanned building involves.

These two features - rendering the useful useless

and the beautiful ugly - occur likewise in the other main exhibits of the tour. On reaching the study the reader's scholarly enthusiasm is given a quick fillip:

His Study! with what Authors is it stor'd?

(133)

But the study is one only in name; taste has displaced sense here as elsewhere, and the book has become a physical object of no other interest. The Chapel in turn proves to be only a collection of the superficial forms of the church: an incongruous alliterative linking in line 142's "Pride of Pray'r" produces the paradox Pope characteristically employs to indicate a disordered mind; Baroque apotheosis appeals directly to Timon's taste, becoming in his house merely another opportunity for the imposition of his vulgar psyche on externals. "Gilded clouds" bring before the eye a hereafter which merely continues the here and now of meaningless luxury: the fact that the clouds are merely gilt, rather than golden, indicates a similar worship of the apparent and superficial self that appeared at Belinda's dressing table. Timon's religion too confounds "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux" (The Rape of the Lock, I, 138) in its jiggling progress to eternity.¹⁰

At dinner, the physical is as abused as the aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual have already been. The house has been shown off; now at last people are to be seen living in it. Thus the actions of a gathering at dinner allow the psychologist in Pope to see whether the opinion based on

the observation of the results of Timon's building will be confirmed in the type of social enactment which occurs at the dinner table; judging from the grounds, one would expect the dinner to be a social equivalent of the incongruity and the mechanical quality of the villa itself. And so it proves to be; alerted by the concrete qualities of the house, the reader is enabled to notice their temporal counterpart in the ritual and ceremony in which the dinner is enclosed, the continued frustration of function by debased form:

But hark! the chiming Clocks to dinner call;
 A hundred footsteps scrape the marble Hall:
 The rich Buffet well-colour'd Serpents grace,
 And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
 Is this a dinner? this a Genial room?
 No, 'tis a Temple, and a Hecatomb.
 A solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state,
 You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
 So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
 Sancho's dread Doctor and his Wand were there.
 Between each Act the trembling salvers ring,
 From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King.

(151-162)

Instead of enjoyable settings for a meal one is confronted with the same excess of scale in quasi-human terms; the genuine human is depersonalized in the crowd of fifty guests and is reduced to "A hundred footsteps" whose silent march of dragging feet suggests all that is wrong with the dinner

in the phrase "footsteps scrape" with its evocative onomatopoeia of the double s, whose hiss recurs directly afterwards with the snakes - "Serpents grace" - and in the revolting action of the fountains - "Tritons spew". The multiple sibilant effect, a Leitmotiv of discomfort, recurs in line 162: "... soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the King." In line 157 the same effect occurs with the "solemn Sacrifice, perform'd in state". The "solemn Sacrifice" is worth a little more attention. The dinner is something of a religious ritual, held in a "Temple", but apart from its obvious satiric import this quality refers to the chapel scene preceding it; the "Chapel's silver bell" (141) daintily invites one to prayer; but dinner is in effect a religious ritual:

...the chiming Clocks to dinner call;
(151).

This is

the sort of frustrating formality that the proud but basically insecure man requires, and the affable man will dispense with. Timon is all for ceremony.¹¹

As is usual with his attempt, Timon achieves neither aim of a true dinner, neither pleasing nor feeding:

In plenty starving, tantaliz'd in state,
And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,
Treated, caress'd, and tir'd, I take my leave,
Sick of his civil Pride from Morn to Eve;

I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
And swear no Day was ever past so ill.

(163-168)

Such, then, is the character of Timon as revealed by his symptomatic abuse of his resources. How it may be thematically related to the other major characters under examination is the next question to ask; to answer which, it is helpful to glance back to the direct address to Burlington earlier in the epistle:

Yet shall (my Lord) your just, your noble rules
Fill half the land with Imitating Fools;
Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,
And of one beauty many blunders make;
Load some vain Church with old Theatric state,
Turn Arcs of triumph to a Garden-gate;

(25-30).

This hotch-potch is pure Timon. Subsequently Pope sums up what he considers the most basic requirements for the successful architecture of a home; by slight extension, of a human life: "In all, let Nature never be forgot" (50). Timon imitates what he does not understand; copies art rather than nature, and in such a manner as to deny the necessary natural qualities of art (for "natural" read "organic" if preferred). A similar failure to attend to the nature of the human soul leads to a personal frustration and sterility. The obsessive symmetry, ignorant excess, and empty gesture of the villa destroy the aes-

thetic effect which requires an harmonious relation between architecture and environment; and that "harmonious" is the key word: not only because of the importance to Pope's outlook of the "Great Chain", but also because it recalls several of the greatest achievements of the eighteenth century: the music of Bach and Mozart may be fairly related to the poetry of Pope as evidence for the importance which the age perceived in the cooperation of parts with each other.¹² But music does not directly refer to the harmonies of life; poetry, a more denotative medium, can:

Consult the Genius of the Place in all;
That tells the Waters or to rise, or fall,
Or helps th' ambitious Hill the heav'n to scale,
Or scoops in circling theatres the Vale,
Calls in the Country, catches opening glades,

Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
Now breaks or now directs, th' intending Lines;
Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.

(57-64)

These harmonies are as much those of Bach's world as of Newton's; and they are ignored at one's peril, as Timon demonstrates in copying misunderstood art, rather than the observable real world. In place of the beautiful symbiosis indicated in the lines above, Timon is a cancer to be cured only when common sense and the practical real world reassert themselves and agriculture overwhelms his works:

Another age shall see the golden Ear
 Imbrown the Slope, and nod on the Parterre,
 Deep Harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
 And laughing Ceres re-assume the land.

(173-176)

The quality of mind which so substitutes what might be termed "self-imitation" for the "sense" Pope calls the ability to follow external guidance is remarkably well summed up in a feature I have already remarked upon in Timon's case and in the coquette world: the mechanical nature of not only the aesthetics, but also the life lived in the context of these aesthetics. Timon's desire for ceremony, with the uncongenial effect this can cause (for instance, the repeated rhythmic jerks at one's leash in line 129: "But soft - by regular approach - not yet -"), ~~becomes total automation within the house.~~ Spontaneous action is replaced by obedience to mechanical symbols or commands: the "Chapel's silver bell", the "chiming Clocks", the "minutes" and "measure" of the dinner ritual. Taken as a metaphor for his soul, Timon's house is only a short distance from the similarly mechanical "moving Toyshop of their Heart" of Belinda's world. Belinda's dressing-table is a concrete manifestation of her psyche; although Timon's villa is a satire on contemporary bad taste, it has the humorous value too of showing how Timon in turn dresses himself up for meaningless admiration. Belinda is an erotic capitalist, Timon a financial one; but the two are closely related by their

common flaw of pro se capitalism and display: that the proponent chooses to have rather than to be (even when that having involves different states of being: Wharton tries to be everything, but in a manner denying identity itself); being posits relations with one's externals and recognition of their power to destroy or sustain in accord with one's relations with them: Boyle's building rather than Timon's, Clarissa's ideal of a cooperative good humour rather than Belinda's embrace of the sylph. The egoists in these pairs are very different in their way of operating, but essentially they fall readily into place in the ranks captained by the terrible Atossa, imperatrix of nothingness, against the Martha Blounts, Clarissas, Burlingtons and Men of Ross of Pope's world.

The absurdity of Timon's chaotic wealth and of the mind behind it is plain enough, and for the purposes of examining both the satire and the thematic argument of the poem on the subject of aesthetics and utility hardly needs further amplification; but to fit Timon more clearly into the psychological outlook I am tracing in Pope, and at the same time to reach a better understanding and clearer appreciation of the aesthetic and intellectual dividends Pope draws from his use of character sketches, it is useful to compare Timon, the prodigal, with a character superficially extremely unlike him from the Epistle to Allen Lord Bathurst: the miser Cotta (Cutler). The description of Cotta's lifestyle is preceded by a few

lines of characteristic Popian antitheses, which set the tone remarkably well for the antithesis one cannot help detecting in the two characters:

Who sees pale Mammon pine amidst his store,
 Sees but a backward steward for the Poor;
 This year a Reservoir, to keep and spare,
 The next a Fountain, spouting thro' his Heir,
 In lavish streams to quench a Country's thirst,
 And men and dogs shall drink him 'till they burst.

(173-178)

The miser is markedly contrasted with the spendthrift, both in the obvious difference of types which juxtaposed different and mutually opposed characters display, and in the specific contrast of words and phrases: the actions of the miser cause him to "pine" surrounded by his property, while the wastrel's profligacy causes the opposite result when the repletion of "men and dogs" reverses this condition. The miser's wealth forms a surrounding for him when he is "amidst his store", but the external is literally internalized when famished guests "shall drink him 'till they burst".

Despite this distinction, however, the characters similarly share "the fate of all extremes" (Epistle to Cobham, 9) in straying from the golden mean. To pine is uncomfortable; so, however, is to burst; if the father makes no use of his store of goods, his son too abuses it in indiscriminately feasting "And men and dogs", which

two different types of being are by implication much the same to the son, being drawn close to each other by the double "and", which is comparable to the Latin "et ... et", often used in cataloguing. The repeated pattern of

conjunction - monosyllabic noun

slightly breaks down the lexical distinction between the two nouns, as does the syntactic nature of the conjunction itself, whose copulative sense is a little weakened by the blurring of sense in the phrase.

With greater subtlety, the image of water storage -

This year a Reservoir, to keep and spare,

The next a Fountain, spouting thro' his Heir ...

(175-176) -

at once admits the differences between the miser and the spendthrift, and yet sets up an equivalence of tone and type between the two. Gillian Beer has remarked¹³ on the implication of a parodic fountain made up of father and son, with jets of water supplying a punning "hair" in the heir who can no longer contain the superfluity. The eighteenth century tradition of the spendthrift who succeeds the miser is more than a mere cliché;¹⁴ the need of an over-filled reservoir to find an outlet is a result of the laws of nature, physical or human. There is necessarily a distinction of type, however, between the reservoir and the fountain; and their peculiar natures are admitted by the rhythmic difference between the contained iambic infinitives of the description of the reservoir's function -

... to keep and spare

(175) -

and the relatively rushed pace of the fountain, beginning with an accented syllable after the caesura and using a participle rather than an infinitive to emphasize action rather than purpose. Notwithstanding this, however, both lines of the couplet are in regular pentameter, with similarly placed central caesuras, after the third foot and in the middle of it respectively; while the first section of each line closely resembles that of the other, both being introduced by a particularizing or demonstrative adjectival monosyllable, "This" or "The", followed by a noun or substantive adjective, "year" or "next", to complete the temporal phrase, and finished with an indefinite article and the noun complement of an ellipsed verb "to be", "a Reservoir" or "a Fountain". The results are very similar: "This year a Reservoir ... The next a Fountain".

Thus prepared, we come to visit Cotta himself:

Old Cotta sham'd his fortune and his birth,
 Yet was not Cotta void of wit or worth:
 What tho' (the use of barb'rous spits forgot)
 His kitchen vy'd in coolness with his grot?
 His court with nettles, moats with cresses stor'd,
 With soups unbought and sallads blest his board.
 If Cotta liv'd on pulse, it was no more
 Than Bramins, Saints, and Sages did before;

To cram the Rich was prodigal expence,
 And who would take the Poor from Providence?
 Like some lone Chartreux stands the good old Hall,
 Silence without, and Fasts within the wall;
 No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,
 No noontide-bell invites the country round;
 Tenants with sighs the smoakless tow'rs survey,
 And turn th' unwilling steeds another way:
 Benighted wanderers, the forest o'er,
 Curse the sav'd candle and unop'ning door;
 While the gaunt mastiff growling at the gate,
 Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat.

(179-198)

We have already seen that Timon's life is uncomfortable, depraved from what it imitates, and utterly useless as well, since no degree of good accomplished by wages paid out justifies the waste of so much more.¹⁵ Cotta, however, underlines Timon's faults with his own; the miserly "Reservoir", seemingly so different from the "Fountain", has similar flaws. Where the Timons are "Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door" (Epistle to Burlington, 36), in Cotta's home "His kitchen vy'd in coolness with his grot" (182)¹⁶. The coolness in the latter case indicates not only discomfort, but also the lack of food fit for human consumption:

His court with nettles, moat with cresses stor'd,
 With soups unbought and sallads blest his board.

(183-184)

This recalls the frustration of the guest who attempts to satisfy his hunger on "each flying course" at Timon's.

Both these extremists, furthermore, assume a quasi-divine role to justify their financial excesses. I have remarked on the ritual element of the "solemn Sacrifice" which passes for dinner at Timon's villa; Cotta similarly tries to claim an illicit authority for his lifestyle, aping the ascetic and unworldly spirit:

If Cotta liv'd on pulse, it was no more
Than Bramins, Saints, and Sages did before;
To cram the Rich was prodigal expence,
And who would take the Poor from Providence?

(185-188)

Shunning Timon's "prodigal expence", Cotta makes the same mistake as his son who in turn "mistook reverse of wrong for right" (200), although there is a difference of emphasis in the different cases. Trying to set "this oversight" to rights, the son acts on the motives of "his country's cause", "for the Fleet", "to clothe our valiant bands" and "for his country's love". There is something of the grand gesture in these motives, but however disproportionate they may be, he is entitled to some credit for them. Cotta's alleged reasons (or excuses) for his economy, however, do not bear examination. "Bramins, Saints, and Sages" refrain from major expenditure from a conscious contemptvs mvndi or negligentia mvndi engendered by the distraction of more important concerns;

but there is no more reason to believe Cotta more concerned in religion or study than Timon. Use of money, furthermore, is not restricted to the alternatives "to cram" or to starve; and beyond its satiric irony, the sanctimonious reluctance to "take the Poor from Providence" resonates grimly with a later couplet:

While the gaunt mastiff growling at the gate,
Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat.

(197-198)

It seems that "Providence" can be so thwarted by its unsatisfactory agents that the dog, a creature of what should be the provider's household, is reduced to starvation, and the "Poor" are downgraded a further level in the social hierarchy, to be viewed as potential food.¹⁷ There is not only a lowering of the conditions of existence for both patron and client, but also an inversion of their roles, with the proper object of protection - the beggar - appearing to the protector - Cotta as represented by his guard dog - as an alleviator of the self-inflicted miseries of starvation; so thorough is the chaos occasioned by Cotta's parsimony.

Also parallel to Timon's villa is the unpleasing appearance common to villa and hall:

Like some lone Chartreux stands the good old Hall,
Silence without, and Fasts within the wall;
No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,

No noontide-bell invites the country round;

(189-192).

The regulating bells which turn a visit to Timon's into a mechanical round are specifically absent from Cotta's house, but one may remember that the way to correct surfeit is restriction, not starvation. Despite superficial differences the two rich men are essentially the same in their miserable and useless lives. Although Timon lives in a Baroque temple of enforced revels and Cotta in a bleak "lone Chartreux", the religion of each is similarly based on the same underlying selfish pride; the urge to gratify the Ruling Passion at any cost, even one's own destruction, is the Ruling Passion, if such a paradoxical expression may be permitted.

Cotta's case is not a complex one; the only perplexing streak in his nature to engage Pope's artistry is that "the Miser should his Cares employ,/To gain those Riches he can ne'er enjoy" (Epistle to Burlington, 1-2). The irony of a human trait all too sadly familiar (in the fiscal world at least) to require detailed proof is made clear enough when the actual fate of Pope's fictional Cutler is later described:

Cutler saw tenants break, and houses fall,
For very want; he could not build a wall.
His only daughter in a stranger's pow'r,
For very want; he could not pay a dow'r.
A few grey hairs his rev'rend temples crown'd,

'Twas very want that sold them for two pound,
 What ev'n deny'd a cordial at his end,
 Banish'd the doctor, and expell'd the friend?
 What but a want, which you perhaps think mad,
 Yet numbers feel, the want of what he had.

(323-332)

The repeatedly emphasized "want", mentioned five times in the lines above, is ambiguously used; at first reading it appears the symptom of poverty, "want" having the sense of "need", "lack", inopia.¹⁸ Cutler's inability to "build a wall" or to "pay a dow'r" would seem to substantiate this impression. Only at the end of the section quoted is it made clear through the "want of what he had" that Cotta's miserliness is a kind of "want" itself, with the sense now of desire, concupido; the "want of what he had" is thus a multiply barbed hook, referring both to ~~the poverty of those whom he should aid~~, and who at once lack and desire his goods, and to his own determination that having is keeping, which, rendering him impotent as far as use of his wealth is concerned, effectively makes him himself lack what he actually owns, while at the same time being the "desire" type of want as well. In context, "want" here is one of the most connotatively loaded in English Poetry; a "want" which is renamed in the slightly later Epistle to Cobham:

In this one Passion man can strength enjoy,
 As fits give vigour, just when they destroy.

(222-223)

A chapter on the treatment of the rich man would be misleading without mention of those Pope approves of. The Man of Ross is one figure Pope views with strong approbation; unfortunately, however, he is too distant a figure to be of psychological interest to Pope, and the panegyric on his life is only too truly a "long and pompous enumeration" which fails even to convey the facts adequately.¹⁹ The Man of Ross, so tellingly anonymous, is of more symbolic than human significance, and in this respect perhaps indicates a weakness of the method of presentation which Pope has used in his depiction of rich men so far. Failings can be negatively portrayed, by their non-presence, their lack of qualities or actions, or by their impotence; but portrayal of a successful character requires a positive presence which mere assertion, such as stale panegyric, is not vigorous enough to create.

Possibly Pope's most successful portrait of a rich philanthropist is that found in the first dialogue of the Epilogue to the Satires, lines 135 to 136:

Let humble ALLEN, with an aukward Shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it Fame.

This could hardly be less pompous; half the compliment is carried by the lack of any parade of benign accomplishments, with the underlying implication that these would be superfluous. The other half is drawn from the same ambiguity and paradox which in the earlier Pope is so much the mark of the destructive egotist, and which after

1733 (very approximately) begins to assume benign qualities as well. The play of "good" against "stealth", of "humble" against "Fame", and the brilliant conception of the whole paradoxical character, are all perfectly united into a realistic, plausible and affectionate portrait. The conversion of the vital but destructive passions to potential sources of real strength, attempted with little success in the anticipation of Cobham's dying speech, is here under way. It is regrettable that another major eighteenth century writer should have complained of the very motor-force of this portrait and attacked

... some Poet, who may condescend to hitch him
into a Distich, or to slide him into a Rhime
with an Air of Carelessness and Neglect....²⁰

A comparison of Fielding's own pompous panegyric on Allen in the pages surrounding this sneer with Pope's couplet miniature should be all the reply this requires.

Notes

- ¹ See Epistle to Cobham, 71-74:

But grant that Actions best discover man;
Take the most strong, and sort them as you can.
The few that glare each character must mark,
You balance not the many in the dark.

- ² See An Essay on Man, III, 311-318. The social expression of the principles of "Self-love" and "Social [love]" and the psychological expression of the principles of "Self-love ... and Reason" (II, 54) are two sides of the same coin to the Augustan mind.

- ³ See Epistle to Burlington, 41-44:

Something there is more needful than Expence,
And something previous ev'n to Taste - 'tis Sense:
Good Sense, which only is the gift of Heav'n,
And tho' no science, fairly worth the sev'n:...

"Sense" is primarily the ability to "follow Nature" in aesthetic planning; but as "A Light, which in yourself you must perceive" (45), it has a function and significance equivalent to that of "The God within the Mind" (An Essay on Man, II, 204). It would be misleading to regard any of Pope's aesthetic theory in the Epistle to Burlington as being only an academic exercise; the psyche the taste indicates is a constant background

presence.

⁴ See line 50: "In all, let Nature never be forgot."

⁵ W. L. Bowles, "Concluding Observations on the Poetic Character of Pope" in The Works of Alexander Pope quoted in O'Neill, op. cit., 15.

⁶ M. Price, op. cit., 34. In Price's opinion even the Epistle to Cobham is more a drama of human nature than an essay on it, following its actions rather than trying to describe it in the abstract.

⁷ Price maintains (156) that "Pope uses the mock order of false art as a symbol of moral failure." This is true, but inadequate. False art is for Pope also a means of examining what moral failure actually is, and why it fails. This is judged more by reference to the objective standards of the world of nature Pope sets up than by the preconceived ideas of moral right or wrong which Price implies are fundamental to his technique.

⁸ G. Tillotson, On the Poetry of Pope, 30.

⁹ P. Rogers, An Introduction to Pope (London: Methuen, 1975), 80.

¹⁰ This rendering of divinity into a useless object is a more urbane and Timonian form of the making of gods in Absalom and Achitophel, I, 49-50:

Gods they had tri'd of ev'ry shape and size
That God-smiths could produce or Priests devise ...

¹¹ P. Dixon, op. cit., 54.

¹² See B. Dobrée, Alexander Pope (London: Sylvan Press, 1951), 99, for a further example of a critic who notes sim-

ilar effects in Pope and Mozart.

¹³ G. Beer, unpublished lecture on Pope and Keats, Cambridge, 1984.

¹⁴ The first painting of Hogarth's The Rake's Progress is a useful example; gold is literally breaking out of its hiding places.

¹⁵ See the unconvincing lines on "His charitable Vanity" in the Epistle to Burlington, 169-172, which further the case against Timon but do not vindicate Providence.

¹⁶ It is interesting to note that Pope here resists the antithesis of his model:

His Cooks, with long disuse, their Trade forgot;
Cool was his Kitchen, tho' his Brains were hot.

(Absalom and Achitophel, I, 620-621)

The poise between extremes is contained within one man in Dryden's poem; in Pope's "forgot" and "grot" are the same extreme of cold frugality which will be balanced only in the person of Cotta's heir.

¹⁷ This degradation is the same as the result of more obviously vicious indulgence. In Hogarth's Gin Lane one of the many unpleasantly memorable images is that of a man and a dog gnawing at the same bone in the poverty drink has reduced them to.

¹⁸ This is the sense in which Young uses the word at times:

What nature wants has an intrinsick weight;
All more is but the fashion of the plate.

(Love of Fame: The Universal Passion, V, p. 107)

¹⁹ S. Johnson, op. cit., 279..

²⁰ H. Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), I, viii, chapter I,
404.

Chapter Four: Satire and Psychology

Having compared, and I hope interdistinguished, examples of Pope's two main approaches to human nature, we are now in a position to reassess the value and implications of these approaches. To recapitulate briefly: one of these is the humorous, concerned with the exploration of human nature by means of observation; the other is the satirical, concerned with the correction of morals and manners and using accentuation or exaggeration as its main weapon.¹ The chief difference between them is one of degree; human nature is largely manifested in the morals and manners of humanity, accentuation is observation taken a few steps further. The different objectives of the two should be recalled to distinguish between them; humour aims at discovery, satire at chastisement and amendment.

Fairly clear examples of either are not hard to find: Emma is a humorous work, Gulliver's Travels a satiric one. Pope is best remembered in the latter role, perhaps because many of his contemporaries were better psychologists but none was a better satirist. I do not wish to deny the satiric qualities in Pope's work; but an overemphasis of them would lead to the neglect of the other aspect. Pope wrote The Dunciad, but he also wrote An Essay on Man. When these two extremes meet in the creation of poetic portraits the results are more striking than in the purely argu-

mentative or corrective.

There is a region of shared qualities common to both genres, of course. Sutherland writes of satire:

You cannot be a satirist just by telling the truth; you are a satirist when you consciously compel men to look at what they have tried to ignore, when you wish to destroy their illusions or pretences, when you deliberately tear off the disguise and expose the naked truth.²

This is certainly the province of the satirist; but it is by no means exclusively his province. Sutherland goes on to point out that Wordsworth does similar things; closer to present concerns, so does Pope at his least satirical. One recognizes a procedure resembling that of either humour or satire when Mack maintains that "Pope's images ... take ... ordinary established relationships ... and with a delicate readjustment, freshen and fortify their implications".³ The humorous psychological discovery and the satiric disclosure differ more in tone than in essence; the latter may easily prompt the former, and in turn the revelations of study may well inspire the indignation of protest. I should be extremely reluctant to try imposing any notion of an absolute difference between the two onto an actual text. It may, however, be worthwhile trying to consider some of Pope's most obviously and venomously satirical verse portraits in the light of the similarity between the two modes. Satire,


working by exaggeration, tends towards caricature; if true characters are to be produced in satire and minor contemporary quarrels expanded into the timeless portrait,⁴ an element of humour, a broader psychological interest, will have to be located in the "pure" satiric pieces I am about to consider.⁵ I repeat that I shall be looking for the humourist in addition to the satirist, and am in no way trying to replace one with the other. I believe, however, that the satirist can produce better poetry when he is a humourist as well; that the imbrication of psychological interest can turn what might be dismissed as mere mud-flinging into artistic creation demanding serious consideration. To support this claim, it is necessary to begin looking at a few cases. Here is Sporus:

Yet let me flap this Bug with gilded wings,
 This painted Child of Dirt that stinks and stings;
 Whose buzz the Witty and the Fair annoys,
 Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er enjoys,
 So well-bred Spaniels civilly delight
 In mumbling of the Game they dare not bite.
 Eternal Smiles his Emptiness betray,
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
 Whether in florid Impotence he speaks,
 And, as the Prompter breathes, the Puppet squeaks;
 Or at the Ear of Eve, familiar Toad,
 Half Froth, half Venom, spits himself abroad,
 In Puns, or Politicks, or Tales, or Lyes,
 Or Spite, or Smut, or Rymes, or Blasphemies.

His Wit all see-saw between that and this,
 Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss,
 And he himself one vile Antithesis.
 Amphibious Thing! that acting either Part,
 The trifling Head, or the corrupted Heart!
 Fop at the Toilet, Flatt'rer at the Board,
 Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.
Eve's Tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
 A Cherub's face, a Reptile all the rest;
 Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none will trust,
 Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks the dust.

(Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, 309-333)

Pope derives his effects from numerous poetic devices; by direct use of simile and metaphor to compare Sporus to a number of animals ("Butterfly", "Bug", "Spaniels", "Toad", "Reptile") and by means of various homophonic effects, such as the contemptuous repeated plosives of "flap this Bug", which simulate both the actual flapping and the way in which Pope's poetic persona spits out the distasteful words; or the homophonic association of "stinks and stings" which ties the literal and metaphoric offensive qualities of the character into a single unit of sense - Sporus' power to disgust is as great as it is to attack, and conversely his ability to wound is no more than a sting, and a sting no worse than its related stink. Whether the association between the two should be taken as a means rather to heighten one's disgust or reduce one's sense of danger is not made plain; certainly both senses apply; but this ambivalence is itself an important quality of Sporus' overall

characterisation. His speech, and by implication his sexuality, suffers from a "florid Impotence" which perverts his erotic impulse into a parody of ejaculation 

Half Froth, half Venom, spits himself abroad,
possibly with an attendant venereal disease, being "that mere white Curd of Ass's milk". As Rogers observes,

The iconography, so to speak, is all to do with sexual peversion - impotence, bi-sexual tastes, squeaky voice, smutty talk. His very foppishness compounds the dirt which hangs about his person.⁶

This is a little slanted; Sporus is unpleasant in other ways as well; but his sexual ambivalence does diffuse through his other faculties:

In Puns, or Politicks, or Tales, or Lyes,
Or Spite, or Smut, or Rymes, or Blasphemies.
His Wit all see-saw between that and this,
Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.

(321-325)

The first two of these lines are distinguished by their accomplished monotony; the repetitive syntax, the automatic sequence in all but the first phrase of conjunction - noun - comma - conjunction - noun - comma, with most of the nouns monosyllabic, and the extreme similarity of the intended tone of each (since each noun is recognised as a further example of Sporus' nastiness and little more) all combine

to prevent any definite or particular characteristic from emerging to endow Sporus with a definite nature of his own. The impression the couplet leaves is one of generally diffused unpleasantness. In the succeeding lines the reader is deliberately kept from forming any clear impression of what Pope is referring to:

His Wit all see-saw between that and this,
 Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss,
(323-324).

What "that" and "this" may be, what "high" and "low" represent, is quite vague. If "Wit" alternates between "high" and "low" and thus seems to make up the sense of the whole, this construction nonetheless breaks down in the rest of the second line, where the androgyny is typical not of Sporus' intellectual qualities but of his ambivalent sexuality, as line 329 indicates when giving the man the more irritating qualities of both genders: "Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord." The "that" and "this" therefore are given no precise correlatives; but they hardly need them. The italics mark the two words in a kind of verbal algebra as being any of the antithetic possibilities Sporus vacillates between, after which hint of the alternation comes the process itself in the next line, with each "now" equally a movement of the see-saw: "Now high, now low, now Master up, now Miss". Line 321 echoes this, when the "now" again suggests the alternate swinging from state to state as well as indicating the precise alteration of gender the sense speaks of:

"Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord," "The element of beauty contributes to a total effect of repugnance", Leavis maintains.⁷ This is true; but I must consider it a lost opportunity in aesthetic and psychological terms. One looks in vain for any profundity underlying Sporus' ambivalence, such as is to be found in Wharton, Atticus, or Calypso. The satiric image of Sporus is too grotesque to permit any subtlety of investigation into his amphibious nature; and ultimately it is not even attempting this, but simply committing libel. The picture Pope creates of Hervey's superficiality, insincerity and lack of character can produce only a monster; a caricature.

Sporus has dated, and the satire directed against him now lacks the substance which the familiar figure of Hervey would have supplied a contemporary reader with to assess its worth. Ezra Pound shared this objection:

The root of the dullness is in the fact that a good deal of Pope isn't informative! We don't really know anything more about his gilded bug that stinks and stings after reading of him than we did before.⁸

Sporus is at his best a striking emblem to warn the reader what not to be. His portrait accomplishes nothing new: satire and psychological explanation or inquiry in the field of the possible dangers of wealth, pride, lack of moral direction, selfishness and egocentricity all have

their value if unusual aspects of these phenomena are revealed in the verse: Timon, Atticus, Wharton, Belinda and Atossa are all interesting characters in themselves, whether considered psychologically or socially, and one reads Pope's opinions of them with genuine curiosity, with the expectation of encountering more than one could predict. Lacking this basic scientific interest, Sporus gives the reader a quick unsettling reaction like one of Philip Larkin's obscenities, and subsequently can appeal only to the faculty of mud-slinging which Pope himself is resisting in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

It is not easy to transcend this limiting quality of satiric vision without losing the definitive satiric elements; but it is possible. Dryden takes pains to give due praise to the good qualities in characters he nonetheless treats as villains; Monmouth and Shaftesbury are consequently much more convincing than Pope's Hervey. Achitophel is given credit for a nature "Unbrib'd, unsought, the Wretched to redress;/Swift of Dispatch, and easie of Access" (Absalom and Achitophel, I, 190-191) and in Absalom's case "'Tis Juster to Lament him, than Accuse" (486). These are not only truer portraits than that of Sporus; they are better satire as well, in that the faults of the character are best visible as such when the character has not become mere caricature. The techniques and intentions of the humourist can suit satiric purposes; and this is true of Pope as well when he writes a character sketch of a more Drydenian honesty. It was perhaps hard to find any-

thing to respect in Hervey, and the result was the one-sided caricature of Sporus. Addison was more fruitful material:

Peace to all such! but were there One whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,
Blest with each Talent and each Art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Shou'd such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for Arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend,
Dreading ev'n fools, by Flatterers besieg'd,
And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd;
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While Wits and Templers ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise.
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he!

(193-214)

Atticus is one of Pope's most ad hominem portraits outside The Dunciad; originally written as a private fragment aimed

at a specific enemy, or rival, it affects Addison's reputation to this day through the ease with which Atticus can be historically identified. The description of his character is conducted through a number of events or selected traits almost immediately identifiable as a history of Pope's relations with the "Great Turk". Lines 192 to 194 undercut the decorous anonymity of the portrait:

And swear, not Addison himself was safe.

Peace to all such! but were there One whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires

The minor victims are dismissed as not worth the trouble with the firm "Peace to all such!", whose generalised "such", equivalent to "that kind", istiis, puts them all together in a heterogeneous mass; but the "One" of the same line, distinguished from the many, stands out to be noticed, much as Addison's name stands out in the previous line when the plaintiffs bring it forward as an example of a paragon himself threatened by the satiric, by implication hubristic, lash. Addison's identity is never truly hidden. The reference to his Cato ("Like Cato, give his little Senate laws") and to Pope's own prologue to it ("While Cato gives his little senate laws" in Prologue to Mr. Addison's Tragedy of Cato, 23) leaves no room for misunderstanding; but although there is an inevitable personal rancour in this portrait, Pope takes pains to give Atticus, as I shall call him, his due acknowledgement as a man of exceptional abilities:⁹

...but were there One whose fires
 True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,
 Blest with each Talent and each Art to please,
 And born to write, converse, and live with ease:

(193-196).

The most significant departures from the text of 1715 occur in these lines - the earlier ones generally convey far less convincing praise:

But were there One whom better Stars conspire
 To bless, whom Titan touch'd with purer Fire,
 Who born with Talents, bred in Arts to please,
 Was form'd to write, converse, and live, with ease:

(7-10).

By the time of the fragment of 1727, the "Fire" is lit not by a mere "Titan" (Prometheus presumably), but by the god of poetry himself, the "conspire" has given place to the far more resonant "inspires", particularly appropriate to the subject, a poet, and Addison's fame is duly indicated:

Peace to all such! but were there one whose Fires
Apollo kindled, and fair Fame inspires,

(43-44).

Here too, as in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, Addison's qualities are picked out for attention by repetition of their common adjective: "Blest with each Talent and each Art to please". The word "each" receives a slightly heavier ictus than that of the previous word each time:

 ~ ✕ / ~
 with each Talent

~ ~ /
 and each Art 10

but weaker than the full stress given to the quality it describes. Finally in the 1731 to 1734 version Atticus' "fires" are recognised as enough to dispense with the patronage of Apollo and Titan, now resting on his personal "Genius"; he is now "One whose fires/True Genius kindles".¹¹ The kindling is furthermore now described in the present tense; no longer "Apollo kindled" once upon a time, but "Genius kindles" in a continuous process still in action at the time of writing, and whatever the state of relations between the two men.

Atticus is nevertheless still a human failure; his good qualities are as vulnerable to underlying flaws as those strengths which make Wharton "the scorn and wonder of our days" (Epistle to Cobham, 180). The virtues have been conscientiously stated; henceforth they are steadily undercut. Atticus' jealousy is significant only if he has anything to defend; but his literary pre-eminence is in no need of such defence, and any other leading position he holds is not worth it, since the "throne" is a corrupting influence if it leads to poetic fratricide; particularly since Atticus, like any man in such a position perhaps, is "too fond to rule alone" despite his good qualities, and his rule is therefore self-defeating. This theme is further developed in the next couplet:

View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for Arts that caus'd himself to rise;

(199-200).

On the affective side, line 199 is a perfect description of the jealous tyrant - the type of realism in reproduction of human nature which Bowles remarks on, and which is a defining feature of a successful portrait - but it is line 200 which encapsulates the futility of the tyrant's position in the most characteristically Popian fashion:

And hate for Arts which caus'd himself to rise

Yet again the classical ideal of suphrosyne, the Horatian avrea media, is validated; excess of self-love turns into self-hate. Atticus simultaneously feels the conflicting emotions of scorn and jealousy, the former on account of the greatness he prides himself on, the latter because this principle which elevates him is not exclusively his and could be present in another. The false value Atticus places on the man and the ability actually reduces him to a status comparable with that of those he hates. Compare Dryden's underlings who "Oppos'd the Pow'r to which they could not rise" (Absalom and Achitophel, I, 143), in whose case the action of rising is given an exaggerated importance inimical to the true reasons for wishing to rise. Atticus, however, has risen already and lacks the excuse of ambition. The result is that the good points indicated at the beginning of the portrait are meaningless to him except in being his own. In any superegotistical or self-transcendent manifestation they are to be hated; and so the familiar paradoxes of "no meaning" (Epistle to a Lady, 114) and of disrupted order or reality begin to

appear;

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;

(201-202).

Atticus' inconstancy, which enables him at once to prize and to despise a quality, breaks down the forms of distinction; to "Damn with faint praise" is of course to abuse one's power as a critic and conceal the overall value of another's talent by praising only a minor portion, or with less enthusiasm than is deserved, and in this sense it is a tightly realized piece of epigram; beyond this aspect, however, it describes also a total perversion of the function, and even the very sense, of "praise". The "civil leer" likewise, like Timon's "civil Pride", turns genuine civility into a social motion bereft of meaning; the tone signifies more than the sense. Ricks remarks that Pope's use of the word "hesitate" is the first example in the Oxford English Dictionary of its transitive sense; "... other people just hesitate, Atticus' hesitation is active, a tool that he uses."¹²

Other discordant antitheses abound in the description of Atticus; he is "Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike" (203), "A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend" (206), "so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd" (208). In each case the ambivalence of his feelings prevents the action which gratifies the wish, frustrates the position he has assumed, or negates the attempt actually made. Atticus

makes sense only in his own terms:

Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While Wits and Templers ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise.

(209-212)

The "little Senate" is deliberately composed of "Wits and Templers" who pose no threat to Atticus' act of a superior Cato; and their applause is "his own" rather than that of other "polititians" or leading contemporary literati, and therefore of no significance. Atticus has withdrawn from reality, with its pains and its rewards, and so can have a character of excellent parts, but an indifferent whole; his peculiar greatness, which Pope takes such pains to give due credit to, lacks the ability to apply itself to the outside world and is thus reduced to a chaotic introversion (although one must bear in mind the distinctions between the two Addisons of Pope and of history; Pope himself pays Addison substantial compliments elsewhere, in early and in late works). Atossa,

Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:
Shines, in exposing Knaves, and painting Fools,
Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules

(Epistle to a Lady, 117-120)

suffers as a result of her personal pride from the same obligation to war with herself in the person of others, despite the major differences between her and Atticus;

and Wharton too, who is "Born with whate'er could win it [praise] from the Wise" (Epistle to Cobham, 182), is related to Atticus by the possession of good qualities drained off by pride - vanity rather than jealousy, but essentially the same agent of undoing - and hence prevented from any significant use of his powers. Atticus' portrait resembles Wharton's in one particularly telling detail; as Wharton is so desperately short of main verbs until "He dies", so for twenty lines Atticus hangs on an incomplete condition without any dominant syntactic structure; he does not receive so much as a formal sentence. From "but were there One" until the full stop at the end of line 212 there is no hint of an apodosis; Atticus is cut off from even grammatical extension into external referents. In a type of super-syntactic link of association the whole twenty-line protasis is compressed into six monosyllables and answered in the same line with the apodosis "Who but must laugh ...?". All Atticus can amount to is derision and regret:

Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?

Who but must weep, if Atticus were he!

The force of this portrait is considerable; it is no less charged with emotional impact than Sporus', but one recognises in addition an uncomfortable degree of truth beyond the contemporary target of Joseph Addison; the comment is as much on man at large as on one man in particular. Leavis remarks that

As an account of Addison the character may be un-

fair, but for us it is a piece of observation - Atticus certainly exists: the satire lies in the acuteness of the analysis as registered in the witty precision of the statement.¹³

Such "acuteness of analysis" is made possible only by the recognition of something to analyse. The humorist's concern with the truth of a character produces a portrait, likely to be taken seriously, with a satiric moral likely to be taken seriously. There is in Sporus nothing of the sense of waste Atticus evokes; there is therefore at least a loss of subtlety of poetic effect. We laugh at Atticus expressedly that we may not weep.

In this lies the union of satire and humour which I have been suggesting. Jeremy Taylor remarks that "... whatever you put into a man it will smell of the Vessell ..." ¹⁴ when commenting on the possibility of persuading a man to absorb a sermon; this is a critical judgment as true when applied to the use of character to communicate a moral. When a real character with both good and bad qualities is artistically created and the moral remains plausible, the result is a portrait like Atticus'; and the way is opened for the creation of portraits of the admirable. Sporus and the Man of Ross are inverse functions of the same outlook; but the one which generates Atticus can produce Martha Blount as well.

The Dunciad, though more satiric and less apologetic

in intention, shares with the epistle just looked at a tendency to draw less on the universal and timeless than on the immediate and contemporary. As a result of this, though full of lesser characters, it is not as fruitful as one might hope in the production of true portraits. The macrocosmic scope of Pope's historical canvas, if I may so strain my dominant critical metaphor, of necessity limits the opportunities for the development of individuals. Such as do appear, such as Dr Bentley, must be approached much as Timon, as social types rather than as individuals. The Dunciad is unquestionably a powerful work, but it has to be approached almost equally as history and poetry; the vision of the triumph of Dulness is strengthened by its catalogues of anti-heroes, but only by their power to awaken memories of known historical fact. Every dunce Pope brings forth to champion Dulness is a real historical personage, one recognises with alarm while reading. Such effects are bought by a poet at a high price, however: to "Publish the present Age, but where my Text/Is Vice too high, reserve it for the next" (Imitations of Horace, II, 59-60) is worth doing only if the next age can recognise that high vice in its own time. Pope

risked decay by writing a poem which could not be understood twenty miles from London and which looked like being unintelligible at the end of a few years.¹⁵

The decay is often not warded off by the poetic density which saves others of Pope's satires from this danger; The

Dunciad presents a frightening picture of rampant stupidity, but when three names are cited in one line to make a point -

And bade thee live, to crown Britannia's praise,
In Toland's, Tindal's, and in Woolston's days

(III, 211-212)

- it becomes nearly impossible for a reader no longer Pope's contemporary to "regard the Writer's End" (An Essay on Criticism, 255) in any way other than as an academic exercise; what was written with the intention of evoking instant recognition instead interrupts the verse while the reader consults his knowledge of the cultural world of eighteenth century England, or more likely reads the footnotes. Many of Pope's victims, in fact, have shared the fate of the characterless pack of journalists at the games:

Next plung'd a feeble, but a desp'rate pack,
With each a sickly brother at his back:
Sons of a Day! just buoyant on the flood,
Then number'd with the puppies in the mud.
Ask ye their names? I could as soon disclose
The names of these blind puppies as of those.

(II, 305-310)

If The Dunciad has lost much of the force it may have had for the contemporary reader, there are nonetheless sturdier passages which have aged better. The figure of Cibber is not the mere slanderous caricature Sporus is. Like the literary tyrant, the dunce is a type enduring beyond his own

age. Although a character, however, Cibber is neither historically accurate as might be expected in so topical a poem,¹⁶ nor a consistent psychological case. Here is the hero of the epic at his clearest:

Now (shame to Fortune!) an ill Run at Play
 Blank'd his bold visage, and a thin Third day:
 Swearing and supperless the Hero sate,
 Blasphem'd his Gods, the Dice, and damn'd his Fate.
 Then gnaw'd his pen, then dash'd it on the ground,
 Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound!
 Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there,
 Yet wrote and flounder'd on, in mere despair.
 Round him much Embryo, much Abortion lay,
 Much future Ode, and abdicated Play;
 Nonsense precipitate, like running Lead,
 That slip 'd thro' Cracks and Zig-zags of the Head;
 All that on Folly Frenzy could beget,
 Fruits of dull Heat, and Sooterkins of Wit.

(I, 113-126)

Cibber is a fairly straightforward character. The paradoxes which Pope often incarnates in his subjects have not appeared, but the traits from which they arise are present; action without rational motive (based on "mere despair") in which, as usual, the lack of a defining purpose serves to break down distinctions between things or actions; in this case the actions "wrote and flounder'd", which are given identical syntactic status, and very nearly the same lexical value, through the tone supplied by the "mere despair" which serves

both in place of an actual motive force. One may also notice the mock-religious aspect of a lack of respect for a higher good which so often characterizes the egoists Pope attacks: Cibber's "Gods" are of importance to him only for the material purpose of feeding him, and are no longer revered when they fail him:

Swearing and supperless the Hero sate,

Blasphem'd his Gods, the Dice, and damn'd his Fate.

(I, 115-116)

In objection to this claim that Cibber is a virtual atheist, it might be urged that shortly after the description of his room he addresses a prayer to the goddess Dulness; but the quality of his imprecations, and the overall tone of the passage, do not indicate worship. Dulness is Cibber's own quality, as his account of his life indicates when he catalogues the ways in which the goddess has informed his acts:

Me Emptiness, and Dulness could inspire,

And were my Elasticity, and Fire.

Some Daemon stole my pen (forgive th' offence)

And once betray'd me into common sense:

Else all my Prose and Verse were much the same;

This, prose on stilts; that poetry fall'n lame.

Did on the stage my Fops appear confin'd?

My Life gave ampler lessons to mankind.

Did the dead Letter unsuccessful prove?

The brisk Example never fail'd to move.

(I, 185-194)

No one could seriously mistake these lines for even satir-

ized worship. When the Baron in The Rape of the Lock addresses his absurd prayer to love, he acts upon genuine human motives; although these are mere lust and acquisitiveness, he really wants what he prays for, and although a ridiculous figure, he is thus also a recognizable human being. Cibber, however, sometimes serves with minimal disguise as a mouthpiece for Pope. That a man might serve Dulness is quite credible, but that he should consciously and expressly desire to do so is too much to accept. Cibber's prayer, moreover, is at times broken by interjections in Pope's own voice. Consider the lines:

And lest we err by Wit's wild dancing light,
Secure us kindly in our native night.
Or, if to Wit a coxcomb make pretence,
Guard the sure barrier between that and Sense;

(I, 175-178).

Cibber here displays an awareness of the distinctions between utter dullness, the superficial forms of wit, and genuine sense; an awareness which only the lattermost quality would possess, and which a dunce would not even consider. Likewise such a couplet as lines 205 to 206 ("Or bidst thou rather Party to embrace?/(A friend to Party thou, and all her race)") is obviously the observation of a wit, not a dunce.

Part of the dramatic weakness of Pope's attempt to create a dull hero is the self-evident fact that dullness is by its nature not capable of intelligent self-expression; to have Cibber, as Pope conceived him, speak consistently in

propria persona would be to destroy much of his potential as a vehicle for the kind of satire which was Pope's primary concern in this poem, apart from making him a very dull character to read.

It might be maintained that Dryden was more successful in his presentation of a triumphant dunce; Shadwell is never actually allowed to speak in Mac Flecknoe, and so can be represented as a dunce without impossible qualities of self-awareness. Dryden does, however, fall into errors similar to Pope's: the abdicating Flecknoe is himself guilty of witty comments on dullness.¹⁷ Either a non-dunce commentator is needed - a Clarissa, or an authorial voice - or some other type of comment must be implied by manipulation of the medium.

If Pope does not altogether manage to draw a complete character from Cibber's speech - which is no censure, since he achieves his primary, intended effect quite as well by use of the uneasy ambivalence of the Cibber-Pope voice - a more solid character does emerge from the account of Cibber's study. Here we are almost in Timon's world again - or looking ahead to it, considering that much of the 1741 to 1743 poem appeared in the 1728 version, a few years prior to the Epistle to Burlington and Timon's villa. Let us look at the bookshelves in Cibber's room:

Next, o'er his Books his eyes began to roll,
In pleasing memory of all he stole,
How here he sipp'd, how there he plunder'd snug

And suck'd all o'er, like an industrious Bug.
 Here lay poor Fletcher's half-eat scenes, and here
 The Frippery of crucify'd Molière;
 There hapless Shakespear ...

(I, 127-133).

Again one can diagnose the type of greedy egocentricity which feels impelled to possess things irrespective of its need or its ability to use or enjoy them: Belinda's amassing of glances of admiration, with no reality of love underlying, Timon's overwhelming collection of goods he cannot use, understand or enjoy: to these Cibber must be added as a type of the intellectual capitalist. His books and their authors, with all they represent, are reduced to the status of objects; like the beggar outside Cotta's hall, they are merely things to be consumed, or at best ornaments like Timon's wooden library, with physical form counting more than literary content. The classics especially are reduced to things, looking forward to the facet of dullness championed by Bentley: "solid Learning" (147) is represented by equally solid books characterized by age and massiveness, which seems to appeal to Cibber's often emphasised leaden quality. His own books become objects quite readily:

Quartos, octavos, shape the less'ning pyre;
 A twisted Birth-day Ode completes the spire.

(I, 161-162)

Even Cibber admits - though plainly as Pope's puppet - that his writings are mere paper:

Not sulphur-tipt, emblaze an Ale-house fire;

Not wrap up Oranges, to pelt your sire!

(I, 235-236)

These works are, however, getting off lightly by comparison with that suggested in the evil little couplet of 1735:

Cibber! write all thy Verses upon Glasses,
The only way to save 'em from our A - s.

Cibber has the same weighty qualities as his library. Addressing Dulness, he uses an image Pope clearly liked:

O thou! of Bus'ness the directing soul!
To this our head like byass to the bowl,
Which, as more pond'rous, made its aim more true,
Obliquely wadling to the mark in view:

(I, 169-172).

The image has occurred before, both in some similar lines on dullness,¹⁸ and in An Essay on Criticism:

What the weak Head with strongest Byass rules,
Is Pride, the never-failing Vice of Fools.

(203-204)

This gives the closest approach to an account of any motivation to be found in Cibber's case: the propensity to the quality of "Dulness" - virtually synonymous with stupidity and its attendant pride - is less of a psychological phenomenon than the result of the various ways, not expressed in Cibber's case, that the Ruling Passion can go wrong. The description of Cibber is more ambitious than that of Sporus, but does not produce a true portrait. The reasons are similar: the implied "directing soul" in Cibber is not a credible

psychological trait, and Pope makes no attempt to study the dunce's nature.

Strangely, however, The Dunciad does provide one example of something closer to a true portrait: Smedley's return in the diving contest is charged with an extraordinary poetic subtlety; without sacrificing any of the satiric venom, it encapsulates, albeit in parodic form, an essential psychological facet of the dunce character:

First he relates, how sinking to the chin,
Smit with his mien, the Mud-nymphs suck'd him in:
How young Lutetia, softer than the down,
Nigrina black, and Merdamante brown,
Vy'd for his love in jetty bow'rs below,
As Hylas fair was ravish'd long ago.

(II, 331-336)

Erskine-Hill comments on the significance of this passage's ambivalent position between pastoral and satire:

... the experience now comes to us through a dunce's imagination; it is in the first instance Smedley, not Pope, who raises the low subject by beautiful words and classical allusion. A low phrase such as "suck'd him in" is offset by "Smit with his mien", still more by "vy'd for his love ..."; the unpleasant meanings of the Nymphs' names are strangely mingled with their melodious sound ... [the reference to Theocritus' Idyll XIII 36 to 54] serves to transform the repellent reality into something part-

icularly sweet and strange.¹⁹

The "repellent reality" is not negated by this modification; it is rather heightened as it is in Sporus' case. Despite his resemblance to Sporus, however, Smedley assumes a more complex psychological value; the reader must respond not to the poet's direct expression of disgust at the enemy he depicts, but to the implications of the character poetically created. Smedley is still more a subject of caricature than portrait; but using portraiture's approach through character, the satire assumes a profundity lacking from the mere assertion of Sporus.

Inevitably the comparison of openly satiric verse characters with each other raises the question of the values by which such satire is to be judged. Pope's ideas of the psyche might even be advanced as arguments that satire itself is useless. Satire is intended to amend faults in the subject; but the means of promoting such amendment, namely the artificial exaggeration of deviations from a norm, relies on the recognition of and respect for such a norm. The desire for happiness, "our being's end and aim", is the centre of the hypothetical Ruling Passion; when arguing about this force, Pope defines it as immutable.²⁰ If this were correct, a Sporus would be immune to satire since all his actions would be defensible as being directed to the gratification of his "amphibious" passion. Johnson attacked the idea on the grounds that it allowed full licence to the self:

This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as

false; its tendency is to produce a belief of a kind of moral predestination, or overruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it, is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice and opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful domination of nature, in obeying the resistless authority of his ruling passion.²¹

Johnson's attack is of questionable value as far as the psychological side of Pope's verse is concerned; the validity of a scientific theory, in psychology as in any other study, has nothing to do with the uses to which it may be put. Once the principle of one's own taste or inclination - whether called the Ruling Passion or not - is admitted to be the prime mover of the spirit, however, no basis remains from which the moral rebuke of satire may be launched: what is reason for indignation in the satirist can as easily be the basic moral principle of the subject's life.

At its most successful, I should maintain, Pope's satire does not make its attacks on human failings on the grounds of moral principle. Rather it merges with the exploratory nature of humour to discover what aspects of character make for human failure, and in what way it manifests itself: in self-frustration, impotence, and all the subtle qualities in the paradoxes, failures to act, and ultimate deaths of the characters I have been looking at. These are amoral phenomena of the objective world, which does not rely on

recognition for its power; and it is in their deviations from that world that Pope's characters can be shown, not as mere satiric caricatures of human vice, but as genuine human beings whose fault is not their idiosyncratic inclination of the passions, but the failure to accommodate them to the world. Pope's most powerful satiric weapon is the same as his most useful humorous tool; the laughter raised at the fundamentally ridiculous nature of the egoist, whose disease and, if common sense interposes, potential cure, the principle of individual selfhood, is the true significance of the Ruling Passion.

Notes

- ¹ I am again following Fowler's distinction.
- ² J. Sutherland, English Satire (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 11.
- ³ M. Mack, "'Wit and Poetry and Pope': Some Observations on his Imagery" in op. cit., 24.
- ⁴ See Epistle to Mr. Jervas, 55-58.
- ⁵ The distinguishing feature being that they are neither set in the context of an argument, like Wharton or Timon, nor played off against non-satiric humorous characters, as Belinda is against Clarissa.
- ⁶ P. Rogers, op. cit., 86.
- ⁷ F. R. Leavis, Revaluation (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), 91.
- ⁸ E. Pound, ABC of Reading (London: Routledge and Sons, 1934), 157-158.
- ⁹ Pope had in fact drawn on Addison's translation of Ovid for his own Iliad. See F. Rosslyn, "Pope and Addison" in Notes and Queries (New Series), 24, No. 3 (June 1977), 237.
- ¹⁰ I employ the symbol ψ to mark an intermediate stress value.
- ¹¹ See also the epitaph of 1711 on Caryll, lines 10 to 11:

Ye Few, whom better Genius does inspire,
Exalted Souls, inform'd with purer Fire!

- ¹² C. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style (Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 1972), 81.

¹³ F. R. Leavis, op. cit., 89.

¹⁴ J. Taylor, from Via Intelligentiae in The Golden Grove, ed. L. Pearsall Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 61.

¹⁵ G. Tillotson, On the Poetry of Pope, 101-102.

¹⁶ Johnson claims Pope "depraved his poem" by replacing Theobald with Cibber without altering the character. See Lives, 288.

¹⁷ See Mac Flecknoe, 145-164.

¹⁸ See "Similitudes (a) Of the Byass of a Bowl" in Lines added to Wycherley's Poems.

¹⁹ H. Erskine-Hill, Pope: The Dunciad, 32.

²⁰ Epistle to Cobham, 173.

²¹ S. Johnson, op. cit., 280.

Chapter Five: Resolution: Epistle to a Lady

The second of the poems generally referred to as the Moral Essays shares with both the first and with The Rape of the Lock the common subject of a psychological world of constant flux. In all these poems the claims of common sense are to be asserted in the context of an ever changing environment and an ambivalent human nature; all these are marked by a Heraclitean fluidity¹ in which the search for a constant in human nature reveals only a constant variety. The constant, as far as it can be apprehended, turns out to be only the principle of selfhood itself, which is manifest in various successful or unsuccessful classes of artificial activity, social, personal or artistic. Epistle to a Lady, however, differs from all the other poems I have considered so far, in that from the start of his study of female character Pope accepts that variability will be, not something to overcome, but an essential part of the subject itself. The view of womankind he begins his poem with is particularly suitable for this purpose:

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
 'Most Women have no Characters at all'.
 Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
 And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.

(1-4)

This is quite different from the fixed Ruling Passion the Epistle to Cobham attempts to set up. The reader is led to believe that the subject under consideration is one necessarily unfixed and indefinite. Woman are described in significantly insignificant terms; one reads the "soft" in part as an epithet automatically applied by decorous cliché to female emollience, and the thematic implications slip in unnoticed at first. Likewise the "black, brown, or fair" of line 4 is an Augustan commonplace, a generalizer as well as a particularizer. There is a slight hint in the implied tone of the line that a single homogeneous matter is at once "black, brown, or fair."²

A similar case of the seemingly definite's proving different from one's expectations is noticeable in the slight dichotomy between the tone the couplets derive from their pace - an easy, confident, conversational flow without interruption from punctuation save at the line endings until line 4 - and the different tone hinted at by the grammatical vagueness of the lines; it is unclear whether the lack of a main verb in either couplet is due to ellipsis (which seems more likely in lines 1 and 2, but in the next two would require the understanding of the subject "they" as well), asyntactic exclamation, or abstract absolutes. Before one has read beyond the first four lines, Pope has thus already created an ethos of mutability and ambivalence which leads the reader to look even more than is usual with his writing beyond the mere statements of the verse for the sense of the work.

The means of engaging this unstable subject is here, as previously, through the use of an art based on observation of what symptoms are apparent of any possible underlying constant reality. These change as rapidly in women as in the men of the Epistle to Cobham:

How many pictures of one Nymph we view,
 All how unlike each other, all how true!
 Arcadia's Countess, here, in ermin'd pride,
 Is there, Pastora by a fountain side:
 Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,
 Is there, a naked Leda with a Swan.
 Let then the Fair one beautifully cry,
 In Magdalen's loose hair and lifted eye,
 Or drest in smiles of sweet Cecilia shine,
 With simp'ring Angels, Palms, and Harps divine;

(5-14).

The various women described are seemingly capable of assuming mutually exclusive roles: aristocratic countess and peasant shepherdess; married social Fannia and naked mythological Leda; penitent Magdalen and glorified Cecilia; but there are in fact common points in each component of every pair of characters. The countess is an Arcadian beneath the ermines; "leering" Fannia would rather be disporting naked with ravishing swans than with her ironically "good man"; and despite their very different natures both the Magdalen and Cecilia are ultimately saints. When differing attributes of one character are selectively portrayed, the artist's abstraction is capable of arranging them to reveal the under-

lying constants. Again one may notice the "here" and "there" type of device Pope uses to group similar things: the woman "here" in line 7 or line 9 and the one "there" in lines 8 or 10 is in both cases a single character; but this is at the same time the unifying of the disparity of types and the admission of that disparity, that "here" and "there" are necessarily different. Only artificial perception is capable of fixing them in an identity. Artificiality, therefore, becomes an acceptable element in the study of human character. Disimulation was a force of concealment in the argument of the Epistle to Cobham³; but as Timon shows, an art which conceals the character becomes itself an indicator of aspects of that character. In the Epistle to a Lady Pope has acquired sufficient respect for the nature of his subjects to describe their unnatural nature; and he has realized the existence of an extension of this acceptance: that a self-consciously artificial art is a very suitable medium for aesthetically sympathetic capture and rendition of the character the mutable spirit produces. At this stage of his artistic maturity satire and humour virtually unite; but his characters in this epistle are certainly not caricatures. Nowhere else does Pope so explicitly set up a gallery of portraits in the guise of the poetic painter.⁴

As a poetic painter, then, Pope expresses his intentions:

Whether the Charmer sinner it, or saint it,
If Folly grows romantic, I must paint it,

Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!

Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air,
 Chuse a firm Cloud, before it fall, and in it
 Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.

(15-20)

Pope is in a way attempting what he so keenly attacked in The Rape of the Lock, and what he suggested in the Epistle to Cobham might be impossible:

To draw fresh Colours from the vernal Flow'rs,
 To steal from Rainbows ere they drop in Show'rs
 A brighter Wash;

(The Rape of the Lock, II, 95-97)

All Manners take a tincture from our own,
 Or come discolour'd thro' our Passions shown.
 Or Fancy's beam enlarges, multiplies,
 Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dyes.

(Epistle to Cobham, 25-28)

But the attempt to capture the appropriately fickle Cynthia (=Diana, the Moon)⁵ differs from the approaches to inconstancy Pope discusses elsewhere. Unlike Ariel, he is trying to abstract a constant underlying the constant changes of life, rather than impose one on them. Although he uses the language of painting, Pope is using the methods of portraiture not to make the same woman into Fannia and Leda, but to discover rather why both fictions appear fitting. This discovery of psychological truths is the key to Pope's intentions in his verse portraits: through it, the intrusive element of subjectivity becomes a usable part of the inquiry, allowing some degree of understanding of the subject to be

reached holistically or intuitively attained via artistic imagination. This lattermost can be taken in its Coleridgean sense; trying to learn how it is that "morning Insects that in muck begun,/Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting-sun" (27-28) is an endeavour equivalent to the recognition of the unity of all existence. Disgust and revulsion are strongly provoked by the lines; but so too is an appreciation of the sheer vitality of the insects whose "inhuman processes are not just to be shuddered from. If anything, their life-cycle ... prompts wonder."⁶ "Contrarieties", in other words, are the subject but not the theme of the epistle, and the confusion of the characters portrayed is employed as a means of approaching the discordem concordiam. Would it be excessive to see Sappho⁷ as a credible resolution of the impossible ideal divine beauty of Belinda at her toilet, and the contempt Pope feels for the element of misplaced beauty in Sporus?

Far more than the Epistle to Cobham, this epistle is based on a remarkable range of character types, listed by Pope as "the Affected", "the Soft Natur'd", "the Cunning", "the Whimsical", "the Wits and Refiners", and "the Stupid and Silly" (Argument); to which might be added "the Furious", "the Trivial", and "the Virtuous and Good Natur'd" to accommodate Atossa, Chloe, and Miss Blount herself. It is a strange, random assortment, neither exhausting the possible types of subdivisions by detailed catalogue nor splitting up womankind into analytic categories. Those chosen do, however, have certain similar elements in their contrarieties. Calypso

is the first of the important portraits:

Ladies, like variegated Tulips, show,
 'Tis to their Changes that their charms they owe;
 Their happy Spots the nice admirer take,
 Fine by defect, and delicately weak.
 'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarm'd,
 Aw'd without Virtue, without Beauty charm'd;
 Her Tongue bewitch'd as odly as her Eyes,
 Less Wit than Mimic, more a Wit than wise:
 Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
 Was just not ugly, and was just not mad;
 Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
 As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate.

(41-52)

The portrait is distinctly individual; the woman who produces such effects without any of the attributes which should cause them cannot be confused with any other of the characters in the epistle. She is nonetheless a perplexing creature; how, one asks while reading, does anyone awe "without Virtue" and charm "without Beauty"; how is she "sure ... passion to create" by nearly repelling? A closer examination of the verse is of little help, for the woman's character appears still harder to understand when her attributes are described:

Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
 Was just not ugly, and was just not mad;...

This couplet builds up both aspects of the character; line 49 mentions her attractive "graces" and "flights", terms which

commend her person and mind; line 50 suggests that she is almost "ugly" and "mad". The two lines are given parallel qualities by their similar structure - in line 49, the adjective "strange" or "stranger" qualifying an attribute on each side of the pause in the middle; matched in line 50 by the identical wording just before the two adjectives which conflict with the qualities just indicated ("Was just not ..."), with a repetition of the central division - as a result of which neither line carries greater weight. Over and above this, the individual lines of the couplet are at variance with themselves; the "graces" and "flights" of line 49 are "strange" and hence not what one normally understands by the terms - is "strange grace" a term of approbation? - while line 50 is similarly unhelpful, simultaneously suggesting and negating the ideas of ugliness and madness: both lines make it plain that Calypso is nearly but not quite what they employ to describe her. Only the recognition that it is the degree of a quality that makes it go on to ugliness or madness, in terms of the practical standards of human experience, renders the paradox intelligible.

As a whole, the portrait baffles as much as its parts do individually. Calypso would seem to be a close relative of the Wharton whose only action is to die; Calypso's verbs are similarly pruned away; there is frequent ellipsis of subject, sometimes of verb "to be" at the same time:

Aw'd without Virtue, without Beauty charm'd ...

Was just not ugly, and was just not mad ...

Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create

This latter ellipsis, of subject and verb, produces such an unsyntactic line in line 48 as almost completely breaks from the sentence it at first appears to be connected with:

Her Tongue bewitch'd as odly as her Eyes,
Less Wit than Mimic, more a Wit than wise ...

(47-48).

"Her" in line 47 is the only approximation of an opposed antecedent to line 48, and only very free reading will allow even that relation. This very disjunction of line 48, however, invests the line with a crucial significance through the attention it draws to itself: on the one hand it is the most confusing line in the portrait, the vaguest both in syntax and in immediate intelligibility; it is nearly impossible to follow the comparatives without a deliberately slow and careful reading. On the other hand it is semantically the only line which approaches an explanation of the paradox Calypso poses: lacking the quality of the "Wit", still more of the "wise", she is in fact characterized by her very lack of character, by being a kind of tabula rasa which appeals by its readiness to be what the admirer desires, although the mimicry is made possible only by the absence of any character to admire. This is a limitation; it also frees the woman from the monotony of sameness:

Ladies, like variegated Tulips, show,
'Tis to their Changes that their charms they owe;

(41-42).

The alliteration between "Changes" and "charms" underlines their similar senses; I have already referred at some length (in my first chapter) to Pope's keen sense of variety and his value for the preservation of distinction which makes true variety possible. An egoist like Wharton who tries to incorporate mutually exclusive elements ends up with a self-defeating character (while one like Timon, who does not realise that there are such things as mutually exclusive elements, ends up with a complete non-character). Calypso is something more than these, if not psychologically then aesthetically. The different types of character which should vary from one mind to another are confused in a single universally receptive human medium, a character without personality whose only distinction is an ability to mimic and thus create a self-directed passion in the admirer, who will at the same time be frustrated by the lack of the otherness that admiration requires. On the brink of all we hate is all we admire as well; in so embodying this paradox, Calypso attains a profundity of significance which entirely vindicates Pope's concern for the particular within the general.

The mixture of seemingly irreconcilable elements into one whole continues in Narcissa's case:

Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash, would hardly stew a child,
Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a Lover's pray'r,
And paid a Tradesman once to make him stare,
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a Widow happy, for a whim.

Why then declare Good-nature is her scorn,
 When 'tis by that alone she can be born?
 Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?
 A fool to Pleasure, and a slave to Fame:
 Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs,
 Now drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres.
 Now Conscience chills her, and now Passion burns;
 And Atheism and Religion take their turns;
 A very Heathen in the carnal part,
 Yet still a sad, good Christian in her heart.

(53-68)

Much like the portrait of Calypso, the description of Narcissa comments as much on the "optics seeing" as on the "objects seen"; the confusing element of character is chiefly due to one's false expectations. In the lines which open the portrait, the impact, apart from the sharp visceral force of the ironic nastiness, is chiefly due to the defensive note; who would expect any sane woman to stew a child for cosmetics? The denial of a charge not laid is akin to a literary simulation of the return of the repressed. Since Narcissa has at the time not yet been given any character, the disclaimer must be read as a reply to expectations that a woman known for vanity (as may be deduced from her name) will be excessively concerned with the trappings of self above all else, with the "wash" which forms part of the "sacred Rites of Pride". It follows, however, that Narcissa will not fit readily into any category:

Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a Lover's pray'r,
 And paid a Tradesman once to make him stare,

Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a Widow happy, for a whim.

(55-58)

Through the irony runs the now familiar stream of paradox; the woman combines in one act charity and whimsy, or swiftly alternates between what should be mutually exclusive opposites: "Atheism and Religion", which are of identical significance, sharing the same predicate, "take their turns", whose "their" applies to the turns of both alternatives; "Conscience" and "Passion" evenly balanced on the caesura of line 65.⁸ Opposites are linked or balanced, with neither being allowed to pre-dominate.

As I remarked, however, Narcissa's portrait comments on more than her own inconsistencies; the paradoxes arise from one's implied false expectations - that her vanity would conceivably go so far as to "stew a child", that virtuous conduct must stem from virtuous motives: rash assumptions after the lines in the Epistle to Cobham:

Not always Actions show the man: we find
Who does a kindness, is not therefore kind;

(61-62).

One whose Ruling Passion, or own nature, makes her "A fool to Pleasure, and a slave to Fame" is related to Wharton and Belinda by a basically egotistical outlook; it is hardly surprising that such a character will appear inconsistent by the standards of the external world it disregards. What is remarkable is that that world should find her paradoxical, being unable to realize that having traits of the self "take ...

turns" is human nature and no more. "Alas! in truth the nymph but chang'd her mind", one might paraphrase from the Epistle to Cobham by way of comment.

The two following portraits, featuring the "Lewd and Vicious" and the "Witty and Refin'd", in the personis of the unidentified "Sin in State" and of Flavia, are in much the same vein, serving chiefly to amplify the theme of the vagaries of individual taste. In each case the result is similar, and by now familiar: the attempt to be too much fails and simultaneously destroys the identity one has. In the first portrait varying dominant principles cancel each other out in turn:

... let Blood and Body bear the fault,
Her Head's untouch'd, that noble Seat of Thought:
Such this day's doctrine - in another fit
She sins with Poets thro' pure Love of Wit.

(73-76)

This alternation of values produces the chaotic montage of "Caesar and Tall-boy, Charles and Charlema'ne" of line 78, in which totally unmatched lovers are paired off on either side of the caesura, kings with servants, historical figures with modern dramatic characters. Not only is each pair self-annihilating as far as any definite statement of the woman's taste goes; the two halves of the line are set against each other to produce further disorders. The pitch of the couplet rises to the caesura with "Caesar and Tall-boy", and then displays a similar falling cadence: "Charles and Charlema'ne."

But the symmetry is that of nothingness mirroring itself in different forms of self-negation; in a rising or a falling pitch the woman's lovers are all the same to her, and the magnitude of the second Charles is insufficient to distinguish him from Charles the footman. The most telling word in the couplet is perhaps the undistinguished "What".⁹

The device Pope employs in his play on "Charles and Charlema'ne" is further developed in the portrait of Flavia in the lines

Wise Wretch! with Pleasures too refin'd to please,
 With too much Spirit to be e'er at ease,
 With too much Quickness ever to be taught,
 With too much Thinking to have common Thought:

(95-98).

The repetition of "With too much" in the beginning of three of the lines (with a further hint of the same phrase in line 95's "with ... too") is immediately evident; its effect is to cross-identify the conflicts in the various lines with each other - in each case, though the actual elements vary, the basic process is the same: pleasures fail to please, quickness at learning prevents teaching, and thinking is of such a kind to oppose thought. These paradoxes undercut the sense of many of the data given in the lines: if "too much Thinking" excludes a kind of thought, too much is ironically too little; if pleasures are refined they should please more, not less. What Flavia takes for pleasures, spirit, quickness, and thinking can only be

the forms of these things pursued beyond all proportion, which pursuit renders the reality inaccessible to the wretched woman. Unless one reads this much "between the lines", as one is clearly intended to, their sense is quite nonsensical, as is Flavia's lifestyle. This nonsensical element is carefully reinforced by the excessive use of the homophonic "to" and "too" in all four lines; the infinitive particle and the adverb are so juxtaposed in every line that the sense becomes slightly blurred. On top of this there is no verb more clearly defined syntactically than a vague infinitive, which verbal form allows still more breaking down of distinctions: "to please" could refer to Flavia, who is most obviously not pleased by her refined hedonism, or to others whom she herself cannot please; in line 96 both she and the "Spirit" are ill at ease both syntactically and contextually; neither she nor her "Quickness" can be "taught", neither she nor her "Thinking" can descend to "common Thought". As in the case of Wharton, Flavia's "Rage to live" (100) precludes the actual business of living, and like Wharton she too can only "purchase Pain" and "die"; and even these actions, being given the plural form of their verbs (not "purchases" or "dies") must syntactically be performed by Flavia's anomalous qualities rather than the whole woman.¹⁰

The greatest of Pope's satiric and psychological portraits follows shortly; Atossa, in whose poetic characterization all that is indicated symptomatically else-

where at last finds an analytic and diagnostic exposition. Several times in this chapter I have suggested the need to "read between the lines" to reach the underlying psychological malaise responsible for the annihilation, or at least frustration, of the character and its intentions; Atossa, however, goes right to the heart of the matter, as one senses even at a first reading. Moreover, Pope writes her character, though it is as direct as Clarissa's, with a poetic density generally associated with his more oblique comments on his subjects. More than anywhere else (barring perhaps the conclusion of The Dunciad), Pope succeeds in this portrait in engaging all his poetic faculties in the task of expressing the inexpressible and concretely accounting for the intangible and inexplicable.

In reaching this degree of artistic achievement Pope is assisted not only by finding a subject after his own heart in the person of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, or Katherine, Duchess of Buckinghamshire,¹¹ but also an actual literary figure prefiguring Atossa by some fifty years. In 1681 the character of Zimri in Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel set up the type on which Pope would base so many characters. Zimri,

A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all Mankind's epitome

(555-556)

is unmistakably a prototype for many of Pope's women, and particularly Atossa, "Scarce once herself, by turns all

Womankind". The two share a common self-frustration as a result of an inclusion of opposites which are not recognized as such because of a common egoist's disregard for the rules of nature which make them mutually exclusive. Atossa is far from mere imitation of Dryden, however:

But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
 Scarce once herself, by turns all Womankind!
 Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:
 Shines, in exposing Knaves, and painting Fools,
 Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.
 No Thought advances, but her Eddy Brain
 Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
 Full sixty years the World has been her Trade,
 The wisest Fool much Time has ever made.
 From loveless youth to unrespected age,
 No Passion gratify'd except her Rage.
 So much the Fury still out-ran the Wit,
 The Pleasure miss'd her, and the Scandal hit.
 Who breaks with her, provokes Revenge from Hell,
 But he's a bolder man who dares be well:
 Her ev'ry turn with Violence pursu'd,
 Nor more a storm her Hate than Gratitude.
 To that each Passion turns, or soon or late;
 Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:
 Superiors? death! and Equals? what a curse!
 But an Inferior not dependant? worse.
 Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
 Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live:

But die, and she'll adore you - Then the Bust
 And Temple rise - then fall again to dust.
 Last night, her Lord was all that's good and great,
 A Knave this morning, and his Will a Cheat.
 Strange! by the Means defeated of the Ends,
 By Spirit robb'd of Pow'r, by Warmth of Friends,
 By Wealth of Follow'rs! without one distress
 Sick of herself thro' very selfishness!
 Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted pray'r,
 Childless with all her Children, wants an Heir.
 To Heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store
 Or wanders, Heav'n-directed, to the Poor.

(115-150)

When first mentioned Atossa is invested with the epithet "great" - "great Atossa": the adjective is worth pausing over. Its immediate application is of course multiply ~~ironic--Atossa is great because self-styled~~ so; and she has no evident claim to the title by any actual desert, which renders the term even more satirically forceful - but the word gains significance when considered in a purely literal sense in the second line of the same couplet:

But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
 Scarce once herself, by turns all Womankind!

(115-116)

Line 116 casts one's mind directly back to "great" - to include all women she would have to be literally "great" - "Atossa the Big", as Shakespeare might have put it.¹² Unlike Zimri, who is merely the "epitome" of "all Mankind", Atossa, though by turns, is "all Womankind", rather than

an extract of a little of each. There is still more to this couplet; in the light of the line in Narcissa's portrait, "And Atheism and Religion take their turns" (66), it would seem that these elements of femininity which Atossa assumes "by turns" will cancel each other out as surely as "Atheism and Religion" do in the line they unhappily share. More interestingly, the greatness of Atossa has a further sense hinted at in further lines; that of some great natural force. Atossa has the qualities of a whirlpool in "her Eddy Brain" (121), and of a tempest: "Nor more a storm her Hate than Gratitude" (132). In the same vein she is endowed with almost supernatural greatness, both infernal - "Who breaks with her, provokes Revenge from Hell" (129) - and divine: "Then the Bust/And Temple rise ..." (139-140). These indications of scale, power, and qualified greatness correspond with the woman's characteristic emotions: "Passion", "Rage", "Fury", "Hate"; her implied expressions of emotion have a violent directness about them:

Superiors? death! and Equals? what a curse!

(135)

But all these types of greatness are subjected to the verse's ironic commentary and undercut in consequence. The "Eddy Brain" and the "storm" are composed of the formless elements of air and water. The whirlpool is rendered ridiculous by a number of devices: the word "Eddy", immediately preceding the noun "Brain", serves syntactically as a noun epithet, but through its qualifying function and its

y termination it reads rather like an adjective in the compound; "Eddy Brain" sounds much like "silly brain" or "dizzy brain"; and so the force with which the montage of the two nouns might have endowed the phrase is carefully dissipated. Even the nominal, lexical sense of "Eddy" is suppressed. The line describing the brain's activity, "Whisks it about, and down it goes again", uses a feeble double i at the beginning in "Whisks it" which gives the already enervated eddy no help from onomatopoeia, while the actual sense of the line reduces Atossa's intellectual activity to a trivial swirl churned up by a domestic whisk: a storm in a teacup. The cadence of the line after the caesura falls in a motion parallel to the sinking of the actual thought in the previous line, and with its sing-song tone ensures that Atossa's reasoning processes cannot be taken seriously:

...and down it goes again.

(122)

Atossa's religious greatness is so exaggerated as to be self-evidently absurd: "Revenge from Hell" is virtually self-parody and needs no comment; and the "Temple" of line 140 is made a sadly ephemeral structure by the collapse described in the same line, in which the falling cadence of the last three feet echoes in itself the fall of the temple:

- Then the Bust

And Temple rise - then fall again to dust.¹³

(139-140)

Even disregarding the collapse Pope tells us of, the idea of a temple - a work of sacred architecture - is most inappropriate to the egotistic and presumably atheistic Atossa (any god being another superior) and consequently the verse describing the apotheosis Atossa might try to grant one who, dead, is no longer a rival is subtly fragmented by the dashes before the word "then" in each line; the break in syntax and rhythm which they cause is a most telling structural weakness. Atossa's temple shares the fault of Timon's of having no devotional impulse behind it; Atossa, like Wharton, means no more by "adore" than by "whore".

There are numerous other incompatibles throughout the portrait - the familiar oxymorons, and the paradox of Atossa's being at once judge and judged as a result of her omniessence, as it might be called:

Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.

(120)

Despite these familiar traits, however, a tone of a distinct identity pervades the description of Atossa, more than it does any other of the portraits looked at. I use the term "tone" despite its critical vagueness simply because the only other way of putting it is in Pope's own language: the listed characteristics yield an underlying constant of inconstancy, a characteristic lack of character. The couplet opening the description helps to clarify the paradox:

But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
 Scarce once herself, by turns all Womankind!

(115-116)

In assuming the identities of all women by turns, Atossa makes her own nature into a kind of compound product; "Scarce once herself" not only contrasts with the assumed roles of the woman (since she is always some part of her universal compound self), but further contains the suggestion that to be "herself" Atossa would have to wear all her personas at once. The conflict necessarily arising from such a union of opposites is pointed out immediately afterwards:

Who, with herself, or others, from her birth,
 Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:
 Shines, in exposing Knaves, and painting Fools,
 Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.

(117-120)

The first line here contains a pointed ambiguity; the relation between "herself" and "others" might be that of alternative and differing subjects of her "warfare"; syntactically they might, as well, be synonyms - "'herself', and 'others' if the first isn't clear enough" could be a fair gloss of the latter reading. The next line, line 118, contains another ambiguity continuing the confusion resulting from Atossa's self-directed impulses: the automatic association between "life" and "upon earth" is habitual rather than syntactically conscious, for the syntax suggests also "warfare upon earth". Atossa does war against

earth - as I previously remarked, her elements are those of inconstancy, water and air in the eddy and the storm respectively, and earth, traditionally a stable element, is therefore inadmissible to her: anything she attempts with permanence in mind is doomed to "fall again to dust".¹⁴ The ambiguities in the two lines themselves serve as devices to portray the essential state of Atossa; in denying the reader any firm, unequivocal statement, they produce an equivalent confusion in his mind.

The connection I have indicated between "herself" and "others" is substantiated by the line "Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules" (120), and this egotistic duality, an attempted self-sufficiency resulting in Atossa's being simultaneously subject and object of her own actions, as it were, is the key to the description of her history and psyche which follows:

From loveless youth to unrespected age,
 No Passion gratify'd except her Rage.
 So much the Fury still out-ran the Wit,
 The Pleasure miss'd her, and the Scandal hit.

(125-128)

Again Atossa's multiple nature is underlined by ambiguity; line 126 assumes two very different but equally suitable values according to one's reading of "gratify'd":

No Passion gratify'd except her Rage.

The word could be either a passive past participle in an

absolute construction, or a simple preterite. The former construction - "no passion was gratified" in general sense - comments on the nature which indulges only its fvror, while the latter - gloss as "no passion gratify'd her" - makes a similar point by very different grammatical means. Considering the two variant possibilities in the light of Atossa's introversion, it is interesting to note that her "Rage" is at the same time the "gratify'd" "Passion", and the "Passion" which "gratify'd", a situation of cyclic self-indulgence arising from the generalization of character which marks the woman. In including all womankind, and, it seems a fair guess, everything else, in herself, Atossa completely internalizes the relations with the world which life requires, containing as she does both judge and judged, gratifier and gratified. Such autophagous self-sufficiency has the disastrous effects indicated in the lines

Strange! by the Means defeated of the Ends,
By Spirit robb'd of Pow'r, by Warmth of Friends,
By Wealth of Follow'rs! without one distress
Sick of herself thro' very selfishness!

(143-146)

Means deny ends by being coexistent with them; all that should be external and desired is internal and despised. All Atossa gets from her multiplicity is a glutted satiety and an attendant sterility:

Atossa, curs'd with ev'ry granted pray'r,
Childless with all her Children, wants an Heir.

(147-148)

An heir cannot be permitted because (disregarding the actual historical deaths of Katherine's five children) to have one would be to admit value to a prospective future state which would assume its value only after Atossa's own death. Only the dead can be forgiven, as we have seen in line 139; but lacking an heir Atossa finds herself in a cul de sac, since including all possibilities she has no objective to progress to; and so after her death all her accumulated goods devolve to the poor, after which another Atossan Übermensch, blindly ignoring the need of selflessness to accompany the transcendent greatness she desires, will presumably battle her way to supremacy and in turn disintegrate for lack of external opposition or objects.

As I said, Atossa is one of Pope's most densely realized portraits. He himself must have been conscious of the ~~force of the character, for immediately afterwards~~ he makes a direct statement of his conceptual technique, as if expounding his views deliberately after showing the full power of their application:

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
 Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
 Some wand'ring touch, or some reflected light,
 Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right:
 For how should equal Colours do the knack?
 Chameleons who can paint in white and black?

(151-156)

The old problems are not denied; the usual means of obser-

vation are inadequate when confronted with the problem of an ever-fluctuating world. This inadequacy is given the same forceful realization here as in the Epistle to Cobham, where the reader's perception is flung about by all the factors of change in observer and observed:

...Fancy's beam enlarges, multiplies,
Contracts, inverts, and gives ten thousand dyes.

(27-28)

The effect of the chopped lines here recurs in Pope's poetic manifesto in the later epistle; the repeated "some" serves to turn the list of artistic techniques into another swift catalogue which the reader is whirled through while seeking the delayed verb:

Some wand'ring touch, or some reflected light,
Some flying stroke

But the application of the technique is very different; one is buffeted about not only by the subject matter, but also by the artistic observer's approach (an effect augmented by the unfixed senses of "wand'ring", "flying", and even "reflected", which recalls the diction of The Rape of the Lock); in his colloquial "hit 'em right" Pope cheerfully accepts that he is no longer striving for the detached viewpoint. There simply is no means of immediately abstracting knowledge from the world; the abstraction occurs in the production of the work of art. When "equal Colours" are found to be unavailable, Pope does in fact "paint" his "Chameleons ... in white and black", a monochrome abstracted

not only in its interpretation and modification of the coloured lizard, but also in its translating the visible "white and black" of the printed page. Pope is now ready to set the subject of his art in context and to account for it without the improvised support the Ruling Passion lends the other attempts; although it is still invoked, the Passion is now no longer an exclusive obsession; two can coexist, one intended to protect the other; and the basic motivation involved is now a psychologically sound urge to pleasure:

In Men, we various Ruling Passions find,
In Women, two almost divide the kind;
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
The Love of Pleasure, and the Love of Sway.

(207-210)

It is not really for the critic to comment on the validity of a writer's opinions unless these directly influence the effect of the verse; but one cannot but notice that, despite the specific significance of "Pleasure" when applied to women in Augustan idiom (i.e. self-gratification, carnal in particular), the division of line 210 could be applied to all human motive, activity and judgment; all actions are motivated by one's concept of the desirable as an immediate or future goal; in which latter case, not directly driven by pleasant sensations, "They seek the second not to lose the first." (214) Women have a specific Ruling Passion: "Ev'ry Woman is at heart a Rake" (216); but the qualities of this obsession as a phenomenon are much the same across

the sexes. In An Essay on Man the Ruling Passion

Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength:
So, cast and mingled with his very frame,
The Mind's disease, its ruling Passion came;
Each vital humour which should feed the whole,
Soon flows to this, in body or in soul.

(II, 136-140)

This is different from the female pursuit of pleasure only
in superficials. The lines in the Essay

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes,
And when in act they cease, in prospect rise;

(II, 123-124)

have their exact equivalent in the epistle's

Pleasures the sex, as children Birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view,
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the Toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost:

(231-234).

The idea in the lines is common in Pope - one recalls the
mountains of study rising one after the other in An Essay
on Criticism - but it succeeds particularly here after the
reader has seen it dramatized in recent characters. Balanced
with the description of women whose self-indulgence has run
up against the harsh realities of ageing:

At last, to follies Youth could scarce defend,
'Tis half their Age's prudence to pretend;

Asham'd to own they gave delight before,
 Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more:
 As Hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spight,
 So these their merry, miserable Night;
 Still round and round the Ghosts of Beauty glide,
 And haunt the places where their Honour dy'd

(235-242)

with its final laying bare of the misery of a life based on inconsistencies and self-indulgence pressed to extremes, there is the reminder that the humble qualities of common sense can convert the Passion of selfishness into a benign force; as in the Epistle to Cobham the absurd death-bed desires of various monomaniacs are modulated through the affectionate description of the courtiers and the compliment to Cobham himself, so in this poem when the self is overcome and the necessities of life are accepted as such an attractive resolution of systems of conduct becomes possible between the sterile extremes of coquette and prude. The destructive feature of hedonism is similar to that of the other egotistic manifestations of the unreasoning self in Pope's verse. The hags have attempted to disregard time and to pursue an ideal of an unchanging state of present selfishness; as time has nonetheless proceeded and the ignored laws of existence have turned their excessive self-gratification, without essential change, into damnation, the hags

... dance the round, but there is a horror and a harshness in the Musicke ... let it be considered

how forc'd a joy this is, that is at the end of
an intemperate feast....¹⁵

This is an image of perdition; but the diagnosis implicit in this intemperance hints at the cure as well. Although the paradoxes of selfhood and the pursuit of pleasure continue into the portrait of Martha Blount, when united with (rather than sterilely subordinated to) good sense the result is at last unequivocally vitalizing and sustaining. Whereas Clarissa appears in The Rape of the Lock as a little sententious when advocating the value of common sense, in the gloomy context of the doomed world of female hedonism Martha Blount appears as a great relief. Against the last quotation from Taylor may be set the following counter passage from the same collection:

... for man and wife in the family are as Sun
and Moon in the firmament of heaven; He rules by
day, and she by night ... the Moon in opposition
to the Sun shines brightest, that is, when she
is in her own circles....¹⁶

The woman who denies her nature, like the other egoists Pope dramatizes, "Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing"; or as a "glaring Orb" if a man (252, 256). Miss Blount is a different class of character:

Oh! blest with Temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to morrow chearful as to day;
She, who can love a Sister's charms, or hear
Sighs for a Daughter with unwounded ear;

She, who ne'er answers till a Husband cools,
 Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
 Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
 Yet has her humour most, when she obeys;

(257-264).

The female qualities, intrinsic to human nature, are still present; the paradoxes are both transformed and retained; ultimately, assimilated at last. When the wife "Charms by accepting, by submitting sways", the lightness and beauty of the line alone indicates a new degree of resolution, while the sense of the paradoxes has been delicately altered as well: in Atossa subject and object are one, confounded in a single character in defiance of the laws of nature or syntax; with Martha Blount the importance of self itself is undercut, and by that action validated: the qualities prized in the self are no less valuable if present in another in the form of "A Sister's charms", or if calling forth the "Sighs for a Daughter". The replacement of "Sister" with "Daughter" in line 260, while observing delicacy towards a smallpox victim, extends the sense from the merely historic to the thematic: poetically at least, Miss Blount is able to transcend the self in accepting successors, unlike the sterile Atossa: likewise she is so far united with her hypothetical mate that obedience is no longer a matter of subordination, or even contest; she "has her humour most, when she obeys". In Atossa, self-gratification breaks down the distinctions and variety of externals; here the distinctions broken down are merely the artificial barriers about the self.

Pope laughs at the paradox, but appreciates its significance as well:

And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
 Woman's at best a Contradiction still.
 Heav'n, when it strives to polish all it can
 Its last best work, but forms a softer Man;
 Picks from each sex, to make its Fav'rite blest,
 Your love of Pleasure, our desire of Rest,
 Blends, in exception to all gen'ral rules,
 Your Taste of Follies, with our Scorn of Fools,
 Reserve with Frankness, Art with Truth ally'd,
 Courage with Softness, Modesty with Pride,
 Fix'd Principles, with Fancy ever new;
 Shakes all together, and produces - You.

(269-280)

"The best kinds of contrarieties", as Pope terms them in his note, are as baffling as ever if one is rash enough to continue the attempt to extract superficial consistency; but the quality of the verse directs one away from such attempts: the tone of "And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,/ Woman's at best a Contradiction still", with its throwaway "believe me", and the resignation of "at best", puts a final stop to the pursuit of a detached standpoint: Pope simply gives it up. This might seem an avoidance of the issue, but that the next ten lines of the verse implicitly engage and account for the problem. The solutions of the inquirer and of his subject are the same; overcoming the detached self in aesthetic or psychological terms, and

letting externals speak for themselves, or assume a significance independent of their being one's possessions or rivals. The verse persuades the reader to accept as much with its sympathetic description of the ideal character, with the inconsistencies of desirable traits being such as the reader's self-image will probably share. The mellifluous quality of the lines is in accord with their harmonious sense:

Reserve with Frankness, Art with Truth ally'd,
 Courage with Softness, Modesty with Pride,
 (277-278).

The metrical variety is remarkable: though both lines of this couplet have a similar symmetry, the regularity of line 277 sets it apart from the second line's near-tetrametric stress pattern (caused by the very weak stress on the last syllable of "Modesty") and the inverted first foot; thus repetitive effects are avoided; but at the same time the lines are drawn together by their similar central break in the rhythm and the common metrical form in the section following each caesura. In place of difference compelled into sameness, the self is expanded into multiplicity.

The verse further breaks down the restraints of individual identity in the listing of male and female qualities as they combine in the type of the "estimable Woman". These qualities are at first clearly, if light-heartedly, allotted to separate sexes:

Your love of Pleasure, our desire of Rest ...

Your Taste of Follies, with our Scorn of Fools

But the flow of the panegyric soon carries away this restraint:

Reserve with Frankness, Art with Truth ally'd,
 Courage with Softness, Modesty with Pride,
 Fix'd Principles, with Fancy ever new;...

The "your" and "our" of possession is abandoned; and although one might read a little between the lines and assign principles, courage and truth to the male character, with the opposites to the female, there would be little point; as it is, Pope carefully leaves it indefinite how modesty and pride should be placed, and "Reserve with Frankness" is completely androgynous. The differences no longer matter once the limitations of the ego are overcome by acceptance of the alter ego in the person of the spouse.

Along with his indication of the means for personal salvation, Pope achieves his resolution of the aesthetic and philosophical complications he has been handling; the portraits themselves have already indicated an intuitive use of the imagination (in the Romantic sense) by their success; with a breaking down of accepted distinctions Pope "Shakes all together, and produces - You"; as a post-Romantic might say, "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create";¹⁷ and the comparison is illuminating

if one considers the similarity between Pope's aesthetic and thematic resolution and Coleridge's primary imagination - the recognition by the finite self of its place in the infinite identity of the universe. In each case, be it Coleridge's critical outlook or Pope's psychological one, the philosophical sense lies in the redemption by acceptance of the external world, social or cosmic. This applies both to Pope's characters and to his own verse writing. The unpopularity of An Essay on Man is largely deserved; but at times Pope harmonizes the verse of that work with the same I AM of life that Coleridge writes of; and, having looked in some detail at Pope's examination of the manifestation of this phenomenon, if it may be so called, I have chosen to end this study by setting a section of that poem in which he clearly recognises a nature beyond the self, inherent in itself rather than in the human being who is part of it, beside a similar Romantic passage:

I felt the sentiment of Being spread
 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
 O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
 O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
 Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
 And mighty depth of waters.

(The Prelude, II, 401-401)

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
 Whose body, Nature is, and God the soul;
 That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
 Great in the earth, as in th' aetherial frame,
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent ...
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

(An Essay on Man, I, 267-274,
 279-280)

Pope's study of human nature reaches a point similar to Wordsworth's in his own engagement with the natural world; in the early days of the Essay, he was in places almost writing Wordsworth; the subject or principle each seeks in his subject is ultimately found to be one with it; and the success of each poet's art and imagination lies in his aesthetic appreciation and apprehension of that unity.

FINIS

Notes

¹ The flow of "Life's stream" (Epistle to Cobham, 31) from The Rape of the Lock (II, 47-52) to Atossa's "Eddy Brain" (Epistle to a Lady, 121) is symptomatic of the constant thematic interest of such mutability.

² See the third verse of the Mohock's song in Gay's The Mohocks, i, p. 10, or the last chorus of The Beggar's Opera, III, xvii (Plays of John Gay, 225) for more examples of the use of this phrase or a close variant to indicate womankind in general.

One might also compare Young's Love of Fame: The Universal Passion, V, 96 to 97, where variable shades of hair on a single woman indicate the unfixed character:

You in the morning a fair nymph invite,
 To keep her word a brown one comes at night;
 Next day she shines in glossy black, and then
 Resolves into her natural red again.
 Like a Dove's neck, she shifts her transient charms,
 And is her own dear rival in your arms.

³ See 171.

⁴ See R. J. Allen, "Pope and the Sister Arts" in Essays presented to George Sherburn, 82. Allen calls the opening pictures of lines 5 to 14 history paintings, but in a sense little different from that of the portrait.

⁵ This fickleness has a further significance. The moon

goddess is at once fickleness embodied, and the deity of chastity, a state the ambivalence of which The Rape of the Lock draws on for its subject.

⁶ R. Grove, "Uniting Airy Substance: The Rape of the Lock 1712 - 1736" in The Art of Alexander Pope, ed. H. Erskine-Hill and A. Smith (London: Vision Press, 1979), 86.

⁷ One might bear in mind the ambivalent state of Pope's relations with Sappho's original when considering this claim.

⁸ The two extremes are again drawn together by Pope's use of established literary commonplace to reduce the distinctions between conflicting senses. Narcissa's similar indulgence of her varying inclinations in the guise of conscience and passion derives from Young's Zara, who plays another misleading role in society:

Zara resembles Aetna crown'd with snows;
Without she freezes and within she glows ...

(Love of Fame: The Universal Passion, V, 86).

The alternating vice and virtue are chiefly significant in indicating the mind behind them.

⁹ Mack calls the abrupt vagueness of the word "particularly felicitous". See "Wit and Poetry and Pope: Some Observations on his Imagery" in op. cit., 28.

¹⁰ A proto-Flavia may be found in The Spectator, in Addison's character of Fulvia. The similarity of names and the similarity of one character to the other suggest a derivation; but a comparison of Addison's moral exemplvm with Pope's portrait will quickly bring out the artistic advan-

tage Pope derives from his ability to base a character on the paradox Addison uses for his conclusion. See The Spectator, 17 March 1711, p. 60.

¹¹ F. W. Bateson's notes to lines 115 ff. state that "the character is clearly based on Katherine, Duchess of Buckinghamshire" although "some details are more applicable to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough." It may be more critically accurate to realize that a poet's imagination may draw on several sources in creating a fiction than to attempt to enforce a rigid one-to-one historical-literary correlation. Even the explicitly identified character of Martha Blount deviates from historical reality in line 260.

¹² See Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost, V, ii, 551-553. Pope is playing on the same ambivalence of greatness of mind and of size in the "Epitaph. On Lady Kneller" of 1725. "Very large, and very wide", she, like Atossa, demolishes monuments to other people.

¹³ This apotheosis of nothingness can apply to more than a raging termagant. Charles XII expresses a similar ideal two decades later: "'Think nothing gain'd', he cries, 'till nought remain'..." See S. Johnson, The Vanity of Human Wishes, 202, in Selected Poems of Johnson and Goldsmith, ed. A. Rudrum and P. Dixon (London: Edward Arnold, 1965).

¹⁴ Earth is, of course, the element of the gnome, the emblem of the prude Clarissa is accused of being. See The Rape of the Lock, V, 36.

¹⁵ J. Taylor, XXV Sermons in The Golden Grove, op. cit., 54. Notice that Taylor is mentioned in line 63 of this poem.

¹⁶ Ibid, 111.

¹⁷ S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. G. Watson
(London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1977), 167.

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